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THE  
HUNDRED MERRY TALES:  
OR  
SHAKSPEARE'S  
*Jest Book.*

---

*Beatrice.* Will you not tell me who told you so?

*Benedick.* No, you shall pardon me,

*Beatrice.* That I was disdainful—and that I had my good wit out of the HUNDRED MERRY TALES;—Well, this was Signor Benedick that said so.

*Much Ado About Nothing.* Act II. Sc. I.

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LONDON:  
J. CHIDLEY, 141 GOSWELL STREET.

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1831.

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Shakespeare's MERRY TALES 12mo,  
8<sup>th</sup>, SCARCE, 8s 6d 1845  
CONTENTS : "A Hundred Merry Tales" being the work  
which Beatrice speaks in "Much Ado about Nothing"  
also the further portion of this curious collection  
published by S. W. Singer under the supposition that they  
were the much desired and long-sought tales.

12. from OREGON

2706 e. 321





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OR  
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J. CHIDLEY, 141 GOSWELL STREET.  
1831.

LONDON:  
PRINTED BY C. AND W. REYNELL, BROAD ST. GOLDEN SQ.



## TO THE READER.

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THIS curious little volume was picked up by the Editor some years ago, and from the amusement it afforded himself and a few of his friends, he is induced to believe that it may not prove altogether uninte-  
resting or unacceptable to the public. One modern edition only, and that a limited and expensive one,—not intended it ap-  
pears for general circulation, but merely as a literary curiosity,—was printed in the year 1814, under the title of SHAKSPEARE'S JEST Book.

The extreme rarity of the work, com-  
bined with its interesting contents and  
high antiquity, form the best and indeed  
only apology for its re-appearance. The

obsolete phraseology and spelling have been scrupulously retained, the Editor conceiving that an attempt to modernize its antique style would go far to destroy the peculiar characteristics of the book. Excepting the substitution of the Roman character for the old black letter, the reader will receive this curious and unique collection of jests in the very guise in which it was discovered,\*—the language quaint—the construction faulty—the words variously and venerably ill-spelt—and the stops almost invariably misplaced. By the way, the many apparently intentional variations in the mode of spelling the same word, even in the same sentence, involve a question of some interest. It is difficult to determine whether this diversity of *spelling* is wholly attributable to the unsettled state of the language at the period the book was

\* In the Roxburghe collection, now in that of the Marquis of Blandford.

written,\* or whether it was not considered ornamental; somewhat akin perhaps to the fastidiousness in modern composition which as studiously rejects the repetition of words and phrases. Whatever the cause, to the *fact* is unquestionably owing our incertitude as regards the orthography of some of our most celebrated names, and foremost in the list may be noted that of Shakspeare himself.

Into the origin or antiquity of this little volume it forms no part of the present task to enquire, more especially as some extracts from the Preface to the edition above alluded to, so ably and so amply supply both.

‘That this little book is the one from which Benedick had accused Beatrice of stealing all her “good wit,” can I think be established satisfactorily; but the extra-

\* It is supposed, about the time of Henry the Eighth.

ordinary rarity of it must account for its having escaped the diligence of the editors of our great Dramatic Bard. I cannot agree with Mr Steevens and Mr Reed, that Shakspeare by the "Hundred Merry Tales," meant the "Cent Nouvelles Nouvelles," or the "Decameron" of Boccaccio .... They are not sources from whence the lively Beatrice could have derived her sarcastic quips and lively repartees, as they consist principally in amorous stories; many of them, in the latter, terminating tragically. Neither does it appear that either of those works appeared sufficiently early in an English dress. .... Shakspeare would of course refer to a book of jests then in the hands of every one; and it must be confessed that the present collection was a more probable source for Beatrice to obtain her "quips and cranks" than either the "Cent Nouvelles" or the "Decameron."

Although the original title of these jests was “Tales and Quicke Answeres,” it appears from the research of the former editor that their popular title was the “Hundred Merry Tales,” in reference perhaps to the number of stories originally contained in the volume.

Later authors appear to have liberally availed themselves of this collection; and among its jests or “merry tales,” the reader will not fail to recognize many an old acquaintance, in the shape of here and there an antiquated tale or fable.

‘The moral reflections which are made to accompany many of the stories is an amusing feature in the collection; for their *naiveté* frequently excites a smile, even when the tale itself would fail to do so.’



**I** Tales, and quicke  
answeres, very mery,  
and pleasant to  
rede.





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T A L E S  
A N D  
QUICKE ANSWERES.

---

¶ Of hym that rode out of London and had his seruaunt folowynge on foote. i.

¶ THERE was a manne on a tyme that rode v. myle out of London, and had his seruaunt folowynge after him on fote, the whiche came so nere, that the horse strake hym a great stroke vpon the thye. The seruaunte thynkyng to be reuenged, toke and threwe a great stone at the horse, and hytte his mayster on the raynes of the backe, who thought it had bene his horse. He within a whyle loked backe and chydde his seruaunte bycause he came haltyng so farre behynde: the seruaunt aunswered: Sir your horse hath gyuen me suche a stroke vpon my thygh, that I can go no faster. Trewely said his mayster, the horse

B

is a great kyckar, for lyke wyse with his  
hele right nowe he gaue me a great stroke  
vpon the raynes of my backe.

¶ *Of hym that preached on saynt Christopheres day.* ij.

¶ A FRYERE that preached vpon a saynt Christofers daye, greatly laudynge saynte Christopher, sayde: what a prerogatyue hadde he here in erthe, in his armes to beare our Sauioure? was there euer any lyke hym in grace: A homely blount felowe heryng him aske twyse or thryse that question so ernestly, answered: yes mary, The asse that bare both hym and his mother.

¶ *Of the Frenche man, that stroue with the Janway for his armes.* iii.

¶ THERE was one amonge the Janwayes, that the Frenche kyng had byred to make warre agaynst the Englysshe men, whiche bare an oxe heed peynted in his shelde: the whiche shelde a noble man of France challenged: and so longe they stroue, that they must nedes fyght for it. So at a day and place appoynted the frenche gallaunt came into the felde rychely armed at all

peces. The Janway all vnarmed came also in to the felde, and said to the frenche man, wherfore shall we this day fyght? Mary sayd the frenche man, I wyll make good with my body, that these armes were myne auncetours before thyne. what were your auncetours armes, quod the Janwaye? An oxe heed, sayd the frenche man. Than sayde the Janwaye, here nedeth no batayle: For this that I beare is a cowes heed.

By this tale ye perceyue howe nyctely the vayne braggyng of the frenche man was deryded.

¶ *Of the curate that sayde our Lorde fedde v. c. persons.* iiiij.

¶ A CERTAYNE curate preachynge on a tyme to his parysshens sayde, that our Lorde with fyue loues fedde v. hundred personnes. The clerke herynge hym fayle, sayde softly in his eare: Sir ye erre, the gospell is v. thousande. Holde thy peace foole said the curate, they wyll scantly beleue, that they were fyue hundred.

¶ *Of hym that profered his daughter in mariage.* v.

¶ THERE was a man vpon a tyme, whiche profered his daughter to a yonge man in mariage, the which yonge manne refused her, sayenge, that she was to yonge to be maryed. I wys, quod her foolysshe father she is more able than ye wene. For she hath borne iii. children by our parysshe clerke.

Lo by this tale ye se, that foles can nat telle what and whan to speake, therefore it were best for them to kepe alway silence.

¶ *Of them that came to London to bye a Crucifixe.* vi.

¶ THERE were certayne men vpon a tyme sent out of a village to London to bye a Crucifixe of wodde. The Caruer that they came to, seynge and herynge by theyr wordes, that they were but folysshe blount felowes, asked them, whether they wolde haue the ymage a lyue or elles deade. whiche question so abasshed them, that they went a syde to deuyse whether was beste. So whan they had spoken priuely to gether, they came to the caruer agayne and said, they wold haue the image a lyue:

for if theyr neighbours at home were nat so contente, they myghte lyghtly kylle hym.

¶ *Of hym that folowed his wyfe to buryenge. viij.*

¶ A MAN that wepynge folowed his wyfe to buryenge, rebuked his lyttel sonne, that wente with hym, bycause he sange, sayenge, that he was peuysshe and madde to synge at his mothers buryenge, but he shulde rather be sory and wepe. The chylde answered: Father, seynge ye gyue to these prestes money to synge at my mothers buryenge, why be ye angry with me, that aske you nothyng for my syngynge? His father aunswere: the preestes offyce and thyne is nat all one.

By this tale ye may perceyue that all thynges beseme nat euery body.

¶ *Of hym that felle in to the fyre. viij.*

¶ A FELOWE that was frowarde to his wyfe, vsed to be oute drynkyng many tymes verye late. So on a nyghte he taryed so longe oute, that his wyfe wente to bedde, and badde her mayde make a good fyre, and tarye vp for hym. About xij. of the clocke home he came, and as he stode

warmynge him by the fyre his hede was so tottye, that he felle in to the fyre. The mayde seing him fall ranne vp cryenge to her maistres, and sayd: Alas my maister is fallen and lyeth longe straughte in the fyre. No force mayde, said her maistres, let him lye and take his pleasure in his owne house, where so euer him listeth.

¶ *Of him that vsed to cal his seruaunt the kinge of fooles.* ix.

¶ THERE was a man that had a dulle lumpisshe felow to his seruant, wherfore he vsed commonly to calle him the kinge of fooles. The felowe at laste waxed angry in his minde to be alway so called and sayde to his mayster: I wolde that I were the kinge of fooles, for than no man coulde compare with me in largenes of kingedome, and also you shulde be my subiect. By this, one may perceiue, that to moch of one thing is not good: many one calleth an other fole, and is more fole him selfe.

¶ *Of the yonge woman that sorowed so greatly her husbondes deth.* x.

¶ THERE was a yonge woman, the whiche for her husbande that laye a dyenge, sorowed oute of all measure, wherfore her

father came often to her and sayde: Daughter leaue your mourninge, for I haue prouyded for you a nother husbande, a farre more goodly man. But she did nat onely continue in her sorowe, but also was greatly displeased, that her father made any motion to her of an other husbande. Assone as she had buryed her husbande, and the soule masse was songe, and that they were at dyner, betwene sobbynge and wepynge she rowned her father in the eare, and sayde: Father, where is the same yonge man, that ye said shuld be min husbande? Lo thus may ye se, that women sorowe ryght longe after theyr husbandes be departed to God.

¶ *Of him that kissed the mayd with the longe nose. xi.*

¶ A BABLYNGE gentylman, the whiche on a tyme wolde haue bassed a fayre mayde, that had nat the leest nose, sayde: How shulde I kysse you: youre nose wyll not suffre our lypes to mete? The mayden waxinge shamefast and angrye in her mynde, for with his scoffe he a lyttell touched her, answered on this wyse: Syr if ye can not kysse my mouth for my nose, ye may kysse me there as I haue nere a nose.

Ye may by this tale lerne, that hit is folye so to scoffe, that youre self therby shulde be laughed to scorne agayne. One that is ouer couetous ought nat to attwite an other of prodigalite. Thou arte her brother (sayd Alcmeon to Adrastus) that slew her husbande. But he blamed nat Alcmeon for an others faute, but obiected against him his owne. Thou hast with thy hande (sayde he) slayne thin owne mother. It is nat ynough to haue rebukes redie, and to speke vyle wordes agaynst others : for he that so shuld do, ought to be without any vyce. For of all men sayth Plutarchus, he ought to be innocent and haue the lyfe vnculpable, that wolde reprehende the fautes of other. The lyttell morall boke saythe :

It is a foule thynge worthye rebuke and blame  
A vyce to reprehende and do the same.

**¶ The uplandissh mans answere, concerning  
inge the steple and pulpit. xii.**

**¶** IN a certayne place, on a tyme the pe-  
rysshyns had pulled downe theyr steple,  
and had buylded it vp newe agayne, and  
had put out theyr belles to be newe founded :  
and bycause they range nat at the bysshops  
entrynge in to the village, as they were wont

and acustomed to do, he asked a good homely man, wether they had no belles in thyr steple: he answered, no. Than sayde the bysshopt, ye may sylle aweye your steple. why so, and please your lordship sayd the man ? Bycause hit stondeth vacant, said the bysshopt ? Than sayde the man, we may well sylle a way an other thinge, that we haue in our churche. what is that, sayd the bysshopt, That is a pulpit quod he. for this vii. yere ther was no sermon made therin.

¶ *Of the beggers answere to mayster Skelton the poete.* . xiii.

¶ A POUR<sup>E</sup> begger, that was foule, blacke, and lothlye to beholde, cam vpon a tyme vnto mayster Skelton the poete, and asked him his almes. To whom mayster Skelton sayde: I praye the gette the awaye fro me, for thou lokest as though thou camest out of helle. The poure man perceyuing he wolde gyue him no thyng, answerd : For soth syr ye say trouth, I came oute of helle. why dyddest thou nat tary styl there, quod mayster Skelton : Mary syr quod the begger, there is no roume, for suche poure beggers as I am, all is kepte for suche gentyl men as ye be.

¶ *Of the chaplen that sayde our ladye  
matens a bed.* xiiii.

¶ A CERTAYNE lordes chaplen bosted on a tyme syttinge at his lordes table, that he sayde our lady matyns euery morninge besyde all his other seruice and orisons. The lorde to proue whether his chaplen did as he sayde, arose yerly on a morninge, and went to his chaplens chamber, and called him, saying: where be ye syr wylliam: Here and please your lordshyp (quod he) in my bedde. why, sayd the lorde, I thought ye had ben vp and sayenge of our lady matyns. I am nowe sayinge it, quod the chappleyn. what lienge in your bedde, quod the lord? why syr, sayd the chapplain where shulde women be serued but a bedde?

¶ *Of hym that loste his purse in  
London.* xv.

¶ A CERTAYN man of the countre, the whiche for busines came vp to London, lost his purse as he wente late in the euenynge: And by cause the summe therin was great, he sette vp bylles in dyuers places, that if any man of the cyte had

founde the purse, and wolde bryngē it agayne to him, shulde haue welle for his laboure. A gentyll man of the Temple wrote vnder one of the byls, howe the man shulde come to his chamber, and tolde where. So whan he was come, the gentyll man asked him fyrst what was in the purse, secondli what countrey man he was, and thirdly what was his name. Syr quod he xx. nobles, was inne the pourse, I am halfe a walshe man : and my name is John vp Jankyn. John vp Jankyn (sayde the gentyll man) I am gladde I knowe thy name. For so longe as I lyue, thou nor none of thyn name shal haue my purse to kepe. And nowe fare well gentyll John vp Jankyn. Thus he was mocked to scorne and went his way.

Hereby ye may perceyue, that a man can not haue a shrewde tourne, but otherwhyle a mocke withall.

¶ *Of the marchaunt that loste his bodgette betwene Ware and Lon.* xvi.

¶ A CERTAYNE merchant betwene Ware and London lost his bodget, and a c. li. therin, wherfore he caused to proclayme in dyuers market townes, who so euer that founde the

sayde bodget, and wolde bryng it agayne, shulde haue xx. li. for his labour. An honeste husbande man, that chaunsed to fynde the sayde bodget, brought it to the baily of Ware, accordyng to the crye, and required his xx. li. for his labour, as it was proclaymed. The couetous marchant whan he vnderstode this, and that he muste nedes pay xx. li. for the fyndynge, he sayd, that there was an c. and xx. li. in his bodgette, and so wolde haue hadde his owne money and xx. li. ouer. So longe they stroue, that the matter was brought before mayster Vauasour the good Judge. whan he vnderstode by the baylye, that the crye was made for a bodget with an c. li. therin, he demanded where hit was? here quod the baily, and toke it vnto him. Is it iuste an c. li. sayde the Judge? ye trulye, quod the baylye. Holde sayde the Judge (to him that founde the bodget) take thou this money vnto thyne owne vse: and if thou hap to fynde a bodgette with a c. and xx. li. therin, brynge it to this honest marchante man. It is myn, I lost no more but an c. li. quod the marchant. ye speke nowe to late, quod the judge.

By this tale ye may vnderstande, that they that go about to disceyue other, be

often tymes disceyued them selfe. And some tyme one fallethe in the dytche, that he him selfe made.

¶ *Of hym that was called cuckolde.* xvij.

¶ A CERTAYNE man, whiche vpon a tyme in company betwene ernest and game was called cuckolde wente angrily home to his wyfe and sayde: wyfe, I was this day in company called kockolde, whether am I one or nat? Syr truly, sayde she, ye be none. By my fayth (sayde he) thou shall swere so vpon this boke, and helde to her a boke. She denyed hit longe, but whan she sawe there was no remedy, she sayde: well sythe I must nedes swere, I promyse you by my faythe, I will swere truly. yea do so quod he. So she toke the boke in her hande and sayd: By this boke syr ye be a cokolde. By the masse hore sayd he, thou lyest, thou sayste it for none other cause but to anger me.

By this tale ye may parceyue, that it is nat best at all tymes for a man to beleue his wyfe, though she swere vpon a boke.

*¶ Of the iolous man. xvij.*

¶ A MAN that was ryght iolous on his wyfe, dreamed on a nyght as he laye a bed with her and slepte, that the dyuell aperd vnto him and sayde: woldest thou nat be gladde, that I shulde put the in suretie of thy wyfe? yes sayde he. Holde sayde the dyuell, as longe as thou hast this ryng vpon thy fynger, no man shall make the kockolde. The man was gladde therof, And whan he awaked, he founde his fynger in \*\*\*\*\*.

*¶ Of the fatte woman that solde frute. xix.*

¶ As a greate fatte woman sate and solde frute in a lente, there came a yonge man bye, and behelde her frute ernestly, and specially he caste his eyes on her fygges, she asked him, as was her gyse: Syr wyll ye haue any figges? they be fayre and good. And whan she sawe he was content: she sayde howe manye? wyll ye haue fyue li.? He was content. So she wayed him oute fyue li. in to his lappe: and whyle she layde a side her balaunce, he wente his waye faire and softly. whan she tourned her to haue taken money, and sawe her

chapman go his waye, she made after a pace, but faster with her voice, than with hir fote. He dissemblinge the mater wente styll forth on. She made suche a cryenge and folkes gathered so faste, that he stode styll. So in the preace he shewed to the people all the matter, and said: I bought nothing of hir, but that that she vnyd gaue me, I toke, and if she wyll I am contente to go be fore the Justice.

*¶ Of a poller that begyled a prest. xx.*

¶ UPON a tyme in Andwarpe a false pollyng felowe came vnto a certeyne prest, that hadde his purse hangyng at his gyrdell strouttinge oute full of money, that he a lyttell before had resceyued, and gentilly gretynge hym sayde: Good mayster, our parysse prest bad me bye him a palle (which is the vppermoste vestement, that a prest syngeth masse in) if it wolde please you to go with me, I were moche bounde to you: for our curat and you be of one stature. The prest was contente. whan they came there, where he wolde bye it, the palle was brought forth, and the prest dyd it on: the poller loketh and toteth theron, and preyseth it, but he layde a wyte, that it was to shorte before. Nay

c 2

quod the syller, the faute is nat in the vestement, hit is the strouttinge purse vnder-neth that beareth hit vp: Shortely to speake, the prest dyd of his purse, and layde hit by, and than the vestiment they be helde agayne. whan the poller saw the preste was tourned, he snatched vp the purs, and toke his legges and to go. The preste rounne after with the vestement on his backe: and the vestement maker after the prest. The prest bad stop the thefe, the siller bad stop the prest, the poller bade holde the mad preste, and euery man wende he had ben mad in dede, because he had the vestement on his backe. And so whyle one letted an other, the false poller went his waye.

¶ *Of Papirius pretextatus.* xxi.

¶ **AULUS** Gellius reherseth, how the Sena-tours of Rome on a tyme helde a great counsaile. Before which tyme the sena-tours chyldren, called of their garmentes *Pueri pretextati*, vsed to come in to the parlement house with theyre fathers. So at this tyme a chylde called Papyrius, cam in with his father and herde the great coun-sayl the which was straytely commaunded to be kept secrete tyll hit was decreed.

whan this chylde came home, his mother asked him what the counsaile was. The chylde answered, hit oughte nat to be tolde. Now was his mother more desyrous to knowe hit than she was before: wherfore she enquired more straitly and more violentlye. The chylde beinge sore constrainyd of his mother, shortelye deuySED a propre merye leasyng. It is reasoned in the parlemente (quod he) whether of both shulde be more profytalbe for the comon welth, a man to haue ii. wiues or els a woman ii. husbandes. whan she harde him say so, her mynde was pacified: and forth with she wente and tolde hit to the other matrones.

On the morowe a great company of the moste notable wyues of Rome came to the parlemente house weping, and humbly prayen: that rather one woman shuld be maryed vnto ii. men that ii. wemen to one man. The Senatours entringe in to the court, what with the sodayn assembling of the wyues and of their request, were right sore astonied, than the childe Papyrius stode forth, and enformed the senatours, how his mother wold haue compelled him to vtter the secrete counsayle: and howe he to content her mynde, feyned that leasynge. For which dede the Senatours right hyghly commended the childes fydelite and

wytte. And forth with they made a law, that no child after that (saue only Papirius) shuld come in to the parlement house with his father. And for his great prudence in that tender age he had gyuen to hym, to his great honour, this surname *Pretextatus*.

Wherby ye may se, that the hygh treasure of man, and greatest grace, resteth in well ordrynge of the tonge. The moste prudent poete Hesiodus sayth: The tonge shulde not ronne at large, but be hydde as a precious treasure. For of all the membres of man, the tonge yll ordered is the worste. The tonge blasphemeth God: The tonge skaundereth thy neyghbour. The tonge breaketh peace, and stereth vp cruell warre, of all thynges to mankynde moste mischeffull, the tonge is a broker of baudrye: the tonge setteth frendes at debate: The tonge with flatterynge, detraction, and wan-ton tales enfecteth pure and clene myndes: the tonge without sworde or venome strangleth thy brother and frende: and brefely to speake, the tonge teacheth cursed heresies, and of good Christiens maketh Anti-christes.

*¶ Of the corrupte man of lawe. xxij.*

¶ THERE was a man of lawe, whiche on a tyme shulde be iudge betwene a poure man and a ryche: the poure man came, and gaue hym a glasse of oyle (whiche was as moche as his power wold stretche to) and desyred, that he wolde be good in his matter: yes quod he, the matter shall passe with the. The riche man perceyvynge that, sente to the same iudge a fatte hogge, and prayed hym to be fauorable on his syde. wherefore he gaue iudgement agaynst the poure man. whan the poure man sawe that he was condemned, pytously complaynyng he sayd to the Judge: Syr I gaue you a glasse of oyle, and ye promysed by your faith, the matter shulde passe with me. To whom the iuge sayde: For a trouth there came a hogge into my house, whiche founde the glasse of oyle, and ouerthrewe and brake it: and so through spyllyng of the oyle I cleane forgot the.

Wherby ye may se, that euermore amonge  
The ryche hath his wyll, the poure taketh wronge.

¶ *Of kyng Lowes of France and the  
husbande man.* xxij.

¶ WHAT tyme kyng Lowes of Fraunce, the xi. of that name, bycause of the trouble that was in the realme, kepte hym selfe in Burgoyne, he chaunced by occasion of huntinge to come acqueynted with one Conon a homely husbande man, and a plaine meanyngel felowe. In whiche maner of men the hygh princes greatly delyte them. To this mans house the kyng oft resorted from huntynge. And with great pleasure he wolde eate radysshes rotes with hym. within a whyle after whan Lowes was restored home, and had the gouernaunce of France in his hande, this husbande man was counsailed by his wyfe, to take a goodly sorte of radysshe rotes and to go and gyue them to the kyng, and put him in mynd of the good chere, that he had made hym at his house. Conon wolde nat assent therto, what folysshe woman quod he, the great princes remembre nat suche smalle pleasures. But for all that she wolde not reste till Conon chose out a great syght of the fayrest rootes, and toke his iourney towarde the courte. But as he

went by the way, he yete vp all the radysshes sauе one of the greatest.

Conon peaked in to the courte, and stode where the kynge shulde passe by: By and by the kynge knewe hym, and called hym to hym. Conon stepte to the kynge and presented his rote with a gladde chere. And the kynge toke it more gladly, and bad one, that was nerest to hym, to laye it vp amone those iewels that he best loued: And than commaunded Conon to dyne with hym. whan dyner was done he thanked Conon: and whan the kyng sawe that he wolde departe home, he commaunded to guye hym a thousande crownes of golde for his radisshe rote. whan this was knownen in the kinges house, one of the court gaue the kyng a propre myniqn horse. The kyng perceiuing, that he dyd it, bicause of the liberalite shewed vnto Conon, with very glad chere he toke the gyft, and counsailed with his lordes, how and with what gyft he myght recompence the horse, that was so goodly and faire. This meane while the picke thank had a meruailous great hope, and thought in his mynde thus: If he so wel recompensed the radysshe rote, that was gyuen of a rusticall man: howe moche more largely wyl he recompence suche an horse, that is gyuen of me that am of the

courte: whan euery man had sayde his mynde, as though the kynge had counsayled aboute a great weyghty matter, and that they hadde longe fedde the pycke thanke with vayne hope, at last the kyng sayd. I remembre nowe, what we shal gyue hym: and so he called one of his lordes, and badde hym in his eare, go fetche hym that that he founde in his chambre (and told hym the place where) featly folded vp in sylke. Anone he came and brought the radysshe roote, and euen as it was folded vp, the kyng with his owne hande gaue it to the courtier, sayenge: we suppose your horse is well recompensed with this iewell, for it hath cost vs a thousande crownes. The courtier went his way neuer so glad, and whan he had unfolded it, he found none other treasure, but the radysshe rote almoste wethered.

*¶ Of an other picke thanke, and the same kinge. xxiiij.*

¶ UPON a time a seruant of the fornamed kinges, seyng a louce crepe vpon the kynges robe, kneled downe, and put vp his hande, as though he wolde do somwhat, and as the kyng bowed hym selfe a lyttell, the man toke the louce, and conueyed her

away priuely. The kyngē asked hym what it was, but he was ashamed to shew. So moche the kynge instanted hym that at laste he confessed hit was a louce. Oh quod the kynge, it is good lucke. For this declareth me to be a man: for that kynde of vermyne principally greueth mankynde: specially in youth. And so the kynge commanded to gyue him fyfty crownes for his labour.

Nat longe after an other, seyng that the kynge gaue so good a rewarde for so smalle a pleasure, came and kneled downe, and put vp his hande, and made as though he toke and conueyed some what priuelye awaye. And whan the kynge constrainyd him to tell what hit was, with moche dissemblyng shamfastnes he sayde, hit was a flee. The kynge perceyuinge his dissimulation, sayd to him, what woldest thou make me a dogge? and so for his fifty crownes, that he prooled for, the kinge commaunded to gyue him fiftye strypes.

Wherby ye maye note, that there is great difference betwene one that doth a thynge of good will and mynde, and hym that doth a thynge by crafte and dissymulation. whiche thinge this noble and moste prudent prince well vnderstode. And one ought to be well ware howe he hath to do with highe

princes and their busynes. And if Ecclesiast forbid, that one shall mynde none yll to a kynge, howe shulde any dare speake yll?

¶ *Of Thales the astronomer that fell in a ditch.* xxv.

¶ LAERTIUS wryteth, that Thales Milesius wente oute of his house vpon a time to beholle the starres for a certayn cause: and so longe he went backward, that he fell plumpe into a ditche ouer the eares. wherfore an olde woman, that he kepte in his house laughed and sayde to him in derision: O Thales, how shuldest thou haue knowlege in heuenny things aboue, and knowest nat what is here benethe vnder thy feet?

¶ *Of the astronomer that theues robbed.*  
xxvi.

¶ As an astronomer that satte vpon a tyme in the market place of a certayne towne, and toke vpon him to dyuine and to shewe what theyr fortunes and chaunses shuld be that came to him: there came a fellow and tolde him (as it was in dede) that theues had broken in to his house, and had borne away all that he hadde. These tidinges greued

him so sore, that all heuy and sorowfullye he rose vp and wente his waye: whan the felowe sawe him do so, he sayde: O thou folissh and madde man, goest thou aboute to dyuine other mennes matters, and arte ignorant in thine owne?

This tale (besyde the blynd errorre of suche foles) toucheth them that handell theyr owne matters lewdly, and wyll intermedle with in other mens. And Cicero saythe: That wyse man, that can nat profitte him selfe, hath but lytell wysdome.

¶ *Of the plough man that sayde his pater noster.* xxvij.

¶ A RUDE vplandisse plough man, whiche on a tyme reproyng a goed holy father sayd, that he coude say all his prayers with a hole mynde and stedfaste intention, without thinkyng on any other thyng. To whome the good holy man sayde: Go to, saye one *Pater noster* to the ende, and thynke on none other thyng, and I wyll gyue the myn horse. That shall I do, quod the plough man, and so began to saye, *Pater noster qui es in celis,* tyll he came to *Sanctificetur nomen tuum,* and than his thought moued him to aske this question:

yea but shal I haue the sadil and bridel  
withal ? And so he lost his bargain.

¶ *Of him that dreamed he founde golde.*  
xxvij.

¶ THERE was a man, that sayde in company  
vpon a tyme, howe he dreamed on a nyghte,  
that the deuyll ledde him in to a felde to  
dygge for golde: whan he had founde the  
golde, the deuyll sayde : Thou canste not  
carye hit a waye nowe, but marke the place,  
that thou mayste fetche it an other tyme.  
what marke shall I make, quod the man ?  
\*\*\*\* ouer hit, quod the deuyl, for that shall  
cause euery man to shonne the place, and  
for the hit shall be a speciaill knowlege.  
The man was contente and dyd so. So  
whan he awaked out of his slepe, he par-  
ceyued, that he had foule defyled his bedde.  
Thus betwene stynke and dyrte vp he rose,  
and made him ready to go forth : and laste  
of all he put on his bonette, wherin also the  
catte had \*\*\*. For great stinke wheroft he  
threw away his couer knaue, and was fayne  
to wasshe his busshe. Thus his golden  
dreame tournedde all to dyrte.

Tibullus sayth: Dreames in the nyght be-  
gylen : and cause fearefull myndes to drede  
thynges that neuer shal be. But yet Clau-

dian sayeth: Dreames in sondrye wyse fygured  
gyueth warnynge of vnluckye thynges. And  
Valerius Maximus wryteth, that as Hamyl-  
car besiged the cyte of Syracuse, he dreamed  
that he harde a voyce saye, that he the nexte  
daye shulde suppe with in the cyte. wher-  
fore he was ioyfull, as thoughe the victorye  
from heuen had ben to him promised. And  
so apparayled his hooste to assaute the  
towne : in which assaute he chaunced to be  
taken in his lodgynge by them of the cyte,  
and so bounden lyke a prysoner, they ledde  
hym in to theyr cite. Thus he more dis-  
ceyued by hope, than by his dreme, supped  
that nyghte within the citie as a prysoner,  
and nat as a conquerour as he presumed  
in his mynde. Alcibiades also hadde a cer-  
tayne vision in the nyghte of his miserable  
ende.

This tale sheweth that dreames sometyme  
come to passe by one meane or other. And he  
that desyreteth to knowe more of dreames  
wrytten in our englysshe tonge, let hym  
rede the tale of the nounnes prest, that  
G. Chauser wrote : and for the skeles howe  
dreames and sweuens are caused, the begyn-  
nynghe of the boke of Fame, to whiche the  
sayde Chauser compiled with many an other  
matter full of wysedome.

¶ *Of the crakynge yonge gentyll man, that wold ouerthrowe his enemys a myle of.*

xxix.

¶ A YONGE gentyl man in a cite that was beseged, rebuked the other and called them cowherdes, bycause they wolde not issue out and fight with their enmyes. So he armed at all peces lepte on horsebacke, and galopte out at the gates. whan he thus crakynge had prycked on aboute a myle, he encountered with manye, that retourned home from the skyrmysshe sore wounded. wherfore he beganne to ryde a softer pace. But whan he harde the hydous noyse, and sawe a myle frome hym howe fyerslye they of the citie and theyr enmyes assayled eche other, he stode even styll. Than one that harde his crakynge before asked him why he rode no nere to fyghte with theyr enmyes. He answered and sayde: Trewly I fynde nat my selfe so able and strong in armes, that my harte wyl serue me to ryde any nere to them.

Wherby may be noted, that nat onely the force of the mynde, but also of the body shulde be wel consydred. Nor one shulde nat bragge and bost to do more than he may well atcheue. There be many, whiche with

their wordes flee theyr enmyes a great waye of, but when they se theyr enmye, they put on a sure breste plate and a gorget of a myle of lengthe. Plutarche wryteth, that whan Memnon made warre for Darius agaynste Alexander: he harde one of his souldyours crake and speake many yll wordes agaynst Alexander: wherfore he rapt hym on the pate with a jauelynge, sayenge: I hyred the to fyght agaynste Alexander, and not to crake and prate.

Otherwhyle sayth Quintus Curtius the couetousnes of glory, and insaciable desire of fame, causeth, that we thynke nothing ouer moche or ouer hard. But Salust saith: Before a man enterprise any feate, he ought fyrst to counsayle: and after to go in hande there with nat heedlonge nor slowly.

¶ *Of hym that fell of a tre and brake his rybbe.*   xxx.

¶ THERE was a husbande man, whiche on a tyme as he clymbed a tree to gette downe the frute, felle and brake a rybbe in his syde. To comforde hym there came a very merye man, whiche as they talked to gether sayde, he wolde teache hym suche a rule, that if he wold folowe it, he shuld never falle from tree more. Marye, sayde the hurte

d 3

man, I wolde ye hadde taught me that rule before I felle: neuer the lesse bycause it may happe to profyte me in tyme to come, lette me here what it is. Than the other sayd: Take hede, that thou go neuer downe faster, than thou wentest vp, but discente as softly as thou clymmest vp, and so thou shalt neuer fall.

By this tale ye may note, that abidyng and slownesse otherwhile are good and commendable, specially in those thynges, wherin spedē and hastines, cause great hurte and damage. Seneca saythe: A sodayne thyngē is nought.

¶ *Of the fryer that brayde in his sermon.*  
xxxi.

¶ A FRYER that preached to the people on a tyme, wolde otherwhyle crie out a loude (as the maner of some fooles is) whiche brayenge dyd so moue a woman that stode herynge his sermone, that she wepte. He parceyuyng that, thought in his mynde her conscience being prycked with his wordes, had caused her to wepe. wherfore whan his sermon was done, he called the woman to hym, and asked what was the cause of her wepynge, and whether his wordes moued her to wepe or nat. Forsoth mayster (sayde

she) I am a poure wydowe: and whan myne  
husbande dyed, he lefte me but one asse,  
whiche gotte parte of my lyuynge, the  
which asse the wolues haue slayne: and  
nowe when I hard your hyghe voyce, I re-  
membred my selve asse, for so he was wonte  
to braye bothe nyghte and daye. And this  
good mayster caused me to wepe. Thus  
the lewde brayer, rather than preacher,  
confuted with his folysshenes, wente his  
waye: which thinkynge for his brayenge  
lyke an asse to be reputed for the beste  
preacher, deserued well to here hym selfe  
to be compared to an asse.

For truly one to suppose hym selfe wyse  
Is vnto folysshenes the very fyrste gryce.

¶ *The oration of the ambassadour sent to  
Pope Urban.*   xxxij.

¶ Out of the towne of Parusyn were sente  
vpon a tyme thre ambassadours vnto our  
holye father Pope Urban, whom they founde  
sycke in his bed. Before whose holynes  
one of the sayde ambassadours had a longe  
and a tedious oration, that he had devysed  
by the way: the whiche er it was ended,  
ryght sore annoyed the popes holynesse.  
whan he hadde all sayde, the pope asked :

Is there anye thyng elles? An other of the thre, perceyuyng howe greatly the ambagious tale greued the popes holynes to here it out, sayde, Moost holy father this is all the effecte, and if your holynes spedē vs nat forthewith, my felowe shall telle his tale agayne. At whiche sayenge the pope laughed, and caused the ambassadours to be spedē incontinent.

By this tale one maye lerne, that superfluous wordes ought dilygently to be auoyded, specially where a matter is treated before an hygh prince.

¶ *Of the ambassadour sent to the prince  
Agis. xxxij.*

¶ NAT moch vnlike the forsayd tale Plutarche reciteth: that whan the ambassadour of the Abderitees had at laste ended a longe tale to the prynce Agis, he asked what answere he shulde make to them that sent him? Say vnto them (quod the prince) whan thou comest home, that all the longe tymē that thou diddest dispende in tellynge thy tale I sate styll and harde the paciently.

¶ *The answeres of Cleomenis to the Samiens ambassadour.* xxxiv.

¶ PLUTARCHE rehersethe also, that what tyme an ambassadour, that was sente from the Samiens, had made a longe oration vnto Cleomenis, to perswade him to make warre to Polycrates, he answered the ambassadour on this maner of wyse: I remembre nat, what thou saydest in the begynnyng of thy tale, and therfore I vnderstand nat the myddis, and thy conclusion pleaseth me nat.

Wherby we may perceyue, that the noble wyse men loue fewe wordes. And as the rhetoriciens say: Amonge the vices of an oratoure, there is none more hurtefull than the superfluous heape of wordes.

¶ *Of the wyse man Piso, and his seruant.* xxxv.

¶ A CERTAYN wise man called Piso, to auoyde greuous ianglynge, commaunded, that his seruautes shulde saye nothinge, but answeres to that that thei were demaunded, and no more. Vpon a daye the sayde Piso made a dyner, and sent a seruaunt to desire Clodius the Consull to come and dyne with him. Aboute the

houre of diner al the guestes came sauue  
Clodius, for whom they taryed tyll hit was  
almoste nyght, and euer sente to loke if he  
came. At laste Piso sayde to his seruaunt:  
Diddest thou byd the Consull come to  
dyner? yes truely sayde he. why cometh  
he nat than, quod Piso? Mary, quod the  
seruaunt, he sayde he wolde nat. wher-  
fore toldest me nat so incontinent, quod  
Piso? Bycause, quod the seruaunt, ye  
dyd nat aske me.

By this tale seruauntes may lerne to  
kepe theyr maisters biddyng: but yet I  
aduise maysters therby to take hede, howe  
they make an iniunction.

¶ *Of the merchant that made a wager with  
his lord. xxxvi.*

¶ A CERTAYNE marchaunt before his lorde,  
that he was subiecte vnto, amonge other  
thynges praysed his wyfe, and sayde, that  
he neuer harde her lette a \*\*\*\*\*. wherat  
the lorde meruailed, and sayd it was im-  
possible: and so layde and ventred a souper  
with the marchant, that before thre monethes  
were ended, he shulde here her lette a  
\*\*\*\*\* or twayne. On the morowe the lorde  
came to the marchaunt and borowed fyfty  
crownes: the whiche he promysed trewely

to repay agayne within viij. dayes after. The marchaunt ryght sore agaynst his wylle lent it : and thoughtfully abode tyll the daye of payment was come : and than he wente to his lorde and requyred his moneye. The lorde, makyng as though he had hadde more nede than before : desyred the marchaunt to lende hym other fyftyne crownes : and promysed to paye all within a monethe. And all though the good man denyed hit longe, yet for feare lest he shulde lose the first somme, with moche grutchynge he lent hym the other fyfty crownes. And so went home to his house ryghte heuye and sorowfull in his mynde. Thus thynkyng and dreadynge diuers thynges, he passed many nyghtes awaye without slepe. And as he laye wakynge, he harde his wyfe nowe and than rappe out \*\*\*\*\*. At the monethes ende the lorde sente for the merchant, and asked him, if he neuer sythe harde his wyfe let \*\*\*\*\*. The merchant aknoweleginge his folye, answered thus : Forsothe syr if I shulde for euery \*\*\*\*\* paye a souper, all my goodes and landes wolde nat suffice thereto. After whiche answere the lorde payde the merchant his money, and the merchant payde the souper. Here by ye maye se, that many things passe by them that slepe, and it is an olde

sayenge: He that slepeth, byteth no body. By this tale ye may note also, that they, the whiche fortune swetelye embraceth, take theyr reste and slepe soundely: And contrarye wyse, they that bene oppressed with aduersite, watche sorowefullye, whan they shulde slepe. This man, which for a very folissh thing preyed his wyfe, afterwarde whan a lyttel care beganne to crepe aboute his stomacke, he perceiued that faute in her ryght great. The morall boke, called Cato, counsayleth vs to watche for the more parte: For moche slomber and slepe is the norisshinge of vice.

¶ *Of the friere that gaue scrowes agaynst  
the pestilence.*   xxxvii.

¶ AMONGE the limitours in the cyte of Tiburtine, was a certayne friere, whiche vsed to preache about in the villages to men of the countrey: and for as moch as they greatlye suspecte that a plague of pestilence shulde come amonge them, he promysed eche of them a lytell scrowe: which he sayde was of suche a vertue, that who so euer bare hit hangyng aboute his necke xv. dayes, shulde nat dye of the pestilence. The folissh people trustynge here vpon, euerye one after his power gaue him money

for a scrowe: and with a threde of a maydens spynninge they hanged hit aboute their neckes. But he charged them, that they shuld nat open it, tyll the xv. dayes ende: for if they did, he sayde, hit had no vertue. So whan the frire hadde gathered moche moneye, he wente his waye. Soone after (as the desyre of folkes is to knowe newes) the sayd scrowes were redde: in which was writhen in Italian speche: *Donna si fili, et cadeti lo fuso, quando ti pieghi, tieni lo culo chiuso.* which is to saye in englysshe: woman if thou spynne, and thy spyndell falle awaye, whan thou stoupest to reache for him, hold thyne \*\*\*\* close. He sayde that this passed all the preceptes and medicines of the phisitians.

By whiche tale one may lerne, that all is nat gospell, that suche wanderers about saye, nor euerye worde to be beleued: For often tymes *Gelidus jacet anguis in herba.*

¶ *Of the phisition, that vsed to write  
bylles ouer eue.*    xxxvij.

¶ A CERTAYNE phisitian of Italy vsed ouer night to write for sondry diseasis diuers billes, called resceitz, and to put them in a bag al to gether: In the morning whan the vrins (as the custome is) were brought to

him, and he desired to shewe some remedy: he wolde put his hande in to the bag, and at al auentures take oute a bille: And in takinge oute the bille he wolde say to him that came to seke remedye in their language: *Prega dio te la mandi bona.* That is to say: Praye God to sende the a good one.

By this tale ye may se, that miserable is their state whiche fortune must helpe and nat reason. Suche a phisitian on a tyme sayde to Pausanias : Thou aylest nothinge. No sayde he, I haue nat had to do with thy phisicke. And an other tyme a frende of his sayde: Syr ye ought not to blaine that phisitian: for his phisicke dyd you neuer hurte. Thou sayest trouthe, quod he : for if I hadde proued his phisicke, I shulde nat nowe haue been alyue. And ageyne to an other that sayde: Syr ye be an olde man, he answered: yea thou wert nat my phisitian. Suche maner of checkes are to lyttell for the leude foles, that wyll practise phisicke, before they knowe what longeth to theyr name.

¶ *Of him that wolde confesse him by  
writinge.* xxxix.

¶ THER was a yonge man on a tyme, which wrote a longe lybell of his synnes, whether he dyd hit for hypocrisy, folysshes-

nesse, or oblyuion I can not say : and whan he shulde confesse him, he gaue hit to the confessour to rede : whiche confessor beinge well lerned and experte in that busynes, parceyued hit wolde requyre a longe tyme to rede ouer : wherfore after a fewe wordes he sayde : I assoyle the frome all the synnes conteyned in this lybell : yea but what shall my penaunce be, quod the yonge man : Nothinge els sayde the confessour, but that thou shalte the space of a moneth rede this lybell ouer euery daye vii. tymes. And all though he sayde it was impossyble for him to do, yet the confessour wolde nat chaunge his sentence. By which mery subtyle answere he confuted the breble brable of the folysshe felowe.

By this tale ye may perceyue, that he that occupyeth this office, that is to saye a confessour, ought to be discrete, prudent, and well lernedde. This confessour knewe well the ordinaunce of holye churche: whiche wylleth confession to be made with the mouthe, and nat by wrytynge.

¶ *Of the hermite of Padewe.* xl.

¶ An hermite of Padow, that was reputed for an holy man, vnder the semblaunce of confession, entyced many of the notablest

wyues of the towne vn to folye and lewednes. So at last, whan his offence was dyuulgate and knownen (for hypocrisy can nat longe be hid) he was taken by the prouost, and brought before the prince of Padowe, duke Francis the vii. of that name, whiche for his disporte sent for his secretarye, to wryte the womens names, that the hermite had layen by. whan the hermyte had rehersed manye of the dukes seruauntes wyues, and the secretarye meryly laughenge had writen them : he seemed as he had al said. Be there any mo sayde the duke ? No forsothe said the hermite. Tel vs trouth quod the secretarie, who be mo, or els thou shalte be sharply punisshed. Than the hermyte sighinge said : Go to, write in thin owne wife amonge the nomber of the other. which saienga so sore greued the secretarye, that the penne felle out of his hande and the duke laughed ryght hartily : and sayde it was well done that he that with so great pleasure harde the fautes of other mennes wyues, shulde come in the same nombre.

By this ieste we may lerne, that one ought nat to reioyce at an others grefe or hurte : For lytell woteth a man what hangeth ouer his owne heed.

¶ Of the Vplandisshe man, that sawe the  
kynge. xli.

¶ AN vplandisshe man nourysshed in the woddes, came on a tyme to the citie, whanne all the stretes were full of people, and the common voyce amonge them was : The kynge cometh. This rurall manne moued with noueltie of that voyce, had great desyre to se, what that multitude houed to beholde. Sodaynly the kynge, with many nobuls and states before hym, came rydynge royally. Than the people all aboute stedfastly beheld the kynge and cryed aloude : God sauе the kynge : God sauе the kynge. This villayne he-rynge them crye so, sayde, O where is the kynge, where is the kynge ? Than one shewynge hym the kynge sayde : yonder is he, that rydeth upon the goodly whyte horse. Is that the kynge, quod the vil- layne ? what thou mockest me quod he, me thinke that is a man in a peynted garment.

By this tale ye maye perceyue (as Ly-curgus proued by experiance) that nou-rysshynge, goodbryngynge vp, and exercys- ben more apte to leade folke to humanite, and the doynges of honest thynges than

Nature her selfe. They for the mooste part are noble, free, and vertuous, whiche in their youthe bene well nourysshed vp, and vertuously endoctryned.

¶ *Of the courtier that bad the boy holde his horse.* xlviij.

¶ A COURTIER on a tyme that alighted of his horse at an Inde gate sayde to a boye that stode therby : Ho syr boye, holde my horse. The boye as he had ben aferde answered : O maister this is a fierce horse, is one able to holde hym ? yes quod the courtier one may holde hym well inough : well quod the boye, if one be able inough, than I pray you holde hym your owne selfe.

¶ *Of the deceytfull scriuener.* xlviij.

¶ A CERTAYNE scriuener, whiche hadde but a bare lyuynge by his crafte, imagyned howe he myghte gette money : So he came to a yonge man, and asked hym if he were payde x. li. whiche a certayne man, that was deade, borowed and oughte to paye his father in tyme paste. The yonge manne sayde there was no suche duetye owynge in his fathers name, that he knewe

of. It is of trouthe, quod the scriuener :  
for here is the oblygacyon thereof, whiche  
I made my selfe. He prouoked the yonge  
manne so moche, that he gaue hym money  
for the oblygation, and before the mayre he  
required the duetie. His sonne that was  
named to be dettour, sayde playnely, that  
his father neuer borowed money : for if he  
had, it wolde appere by his bokes, after the  
marchantes maner. And forth with he  
went to the scriuener and sayde to hym,  
that de was a false man to write a thing  
that neuer was done. Sonne, sayde the  
scriuener, thou wottest nat what was done  
that tyme : whan thy father borowed that  
somme of money thou were nat borne : but  
he payde it agayne within thre monthes  
after, I made the quittance thereof my  
selfe: wherby thy father is discharged. So  
the yonge man was faine to gyue him mo-  
ney for the quittance. And whan he had  
shewed the quittance, he was discharged of  
that greuance. Thus by his faire fraude  
he scraped money from them bothe.

By this tale ye may se, that the children  
in this our tyme be very prudent to get  
money.

¶ *Of hym that sayde he beleued his wyfe  
better than other, that she  
was chaste. xlviij.*

¶ A CERTAYNE man, whose wyfe (as the voyce wente) was nat very chaste of her bodye : was warned of his frendes to loke better to the matter. The man wente home and sharply rebuked his wyfe : and tolde her betwene them bothe, what his frendes had sayde. She knowyng that periurye was no greater offence than aduoutry, with wepyng and sweryng defended her honestie ; and bare her husbande on hande, that they feyned those tales for enuye that they hadde to se them lyue so quietly. with those wordes her husbande was content and pleased. So yet an other tyme agayne, his frendes warned hym of his wyfe, and badde hym rebuke and chas-tice her. To whome he sayd : I pray you trouble me no more with suche wordes. Telle me, whether knoweth better my wiues fautes, you or she ? They sayde : She. And she (quod he) whom I beleue better than you all, sayth playnly, that ye lye.

This was well and wysely done : For one ought nat to gyue light credence to those thinges, wherin resteth perpetuall grefe of mynde.

¶ Of hym that payde his dette with crienge  
bea. xlvi.

¶ THERE was a man on a tyme, which toke as moche ware of a marchaunt, as drewe to fyftie li. and riottously playde and spente the same awaye within shorte space. So whanne the day of payemente came, he hadde nother moneye nor ware to paye: wherfore he was arrested, and must come before the Justyce. whan he sawe there was none other remedye, but that he shulde be constrainyd eyther to paye the dette, or els to go to prison: wherfore he went to a subtile man of lawe, and shewed to hym his matter, and desyred hym of his counsayle and helpe. what wylt thou gyue me (quod the man of lawe) if I rydde the of this dette? By my faythe said the dettour v. marke; and lo here it is redy, as sone as I am quitte, ye shall haue it. Good inough quod the man of lawe, but thou muste be ruled by my counsaile, and thus do. whan thou comest before the Justice, what som euer be sayd vnto the, loke that thou answere to nothing, but cry bea styl: and lette me alone with the reste. Content quod he.

So whan they were com before the Justice, he said to the dettour: doste thou

owe this marchant this somme of money or no? Bea quod he. what beste (quod the Justice) answer to thy plaint, or els thou wilte be condemned. Bea, quod he agayne. Than his man of lawe stode forth, and sayd: Sir this man is but an ideot, who wolde beleue that this marchaunt, whiche is both wyse and subtyle, wolde truste this ideot, that can speke neuer a redy worde, of xl. peny worth of ware: and so with suche reasons he perswaded the Justice to caste the marchaunt in his owne action. So whan the sentence was gyuen, the man of lawe drewe the dettour asyde and said: Lo, howe sayst thou nowe? Haue not I done well for thee? Thou arte clere quitte of the dette that was demanded of the, wherfore giue me my money, and God be with the. Bea, quod he. what quod the laweer, thou nedest not to crie bea no longer, thy matter is dispatched, all is at a poynt, there resteth nothyng, but to gyue me my wages, that thou promysyddest. Bea quod he agayne. I saye quod the man of lawe, crie bea no longer nowe, but gyue me my money. Bea quod he. Thus the man of lawe neyther for fayre nor foule coulde gette any other thinge of his client but Bea. wherfore all angerly he departed and went his waye.

By this tale ye may perceyue, that they whiche be the inuenters and diuisers of fraude and disceit, ben often tymes therby deceyued them selfe. And he that hath hyd a snare to attrap an other with, hath hym selfe ben taken therin.

¶ *Of the woman that appeled fro kyng Philip to kynge Philippe.* xlvi.

¶ A WOMAN whiche gyltlesse on a tyme was condempned by kynge Philippe of Macedone, whan he was not sobre. wherfore she sayde I appele. whether quod the kynge : To kynge Philippe quod she : but that is whan he is more sobre and better aduyised. whiche sayenge caused the kynge to loke better on the matter, and to do her ryght.

This wryteth Val. Maximus. But Plutarche sayth : It was a man, and kynge Philip was halfe a slepe, whan he gaue sentence.

¶ *Of the olde woman, that prayde for the welfare of the tyrant Denise.* xlvij.

¶ WHAT tyme Denyse the tyranne raygned, for his cruelte and intollerable dealynge he was hated of all the cite of Syra-

cuse, and euery body wysshed his dethe, sauе one olde woman, the whiche euery morning praid God to sauе him in good life and helth. whan he vnderstode that that she so dyd, he meruailed greatly at her vndeserued beniuolence. wherfore he sente for her, and asked, why and howe he had deserued, that she prayde for hym ? She answered and sayd : I do it nat with out a cause. For whan I was a mayde, we had a tyran raignyng ouer vs : whose death I greatly desyred, whan he was slayne, there succidde an other yet more cruell than he : Out of whose gouernance to be also deliuered I thought it a hygh be-nifyte. The thyrde is thy selfe, that haste begon to raygne ouer vs more importunately than either of the other two. Thus fearynge leest whan thou arte gone, a worse shuld succede and reigne ouer vs, I praye God dayly to preserue the in helthe.

¶ *Of the phisitian Eumonus.* xlviij.

¶ A PHISITIAN called Eumonus told a sicke man, that laye in great payne, that he coulde nat scape, but he muste nedes dye of that disese. This sicke man within a whyle after, nat by the phisitians helpe, but by the wille of God, guerysshed and

was holle of his disease : howe be hit he was verye lowe and bare broughte. And as he walked forth on a daye he mette the same phisitian : whiche doubtynge whether hit were the same sycke man or nat, sayd : Arte nat thou Gaius ? yes truelye quod he. Arte thou alyue or deed sayde the phisitian ? I am deed quod he. what doste thou here than, sayd the phisitian ? By cause quod he, that I have experience of many thinges, God hath commanded me that I shulde come and take vp all the phisitians that I can get to him. which sayenge made Eumonus as pale as asses for fere. Than Gaius sayd to him : Drede thou nat Eumonus, though I sayd all phisitians : For there is no man that hath wytte, that wylle take the for one.

¶ *Of Socrates and his scoldinge wyfe.* xlix.

¶ LAERTIUS wryteth, that the wyse man Socrates had a coursed scoldinge wyfe, called Xantippe, the whiche on a day after she hadde all to chydde him powred a pysse potte on his heed. He takynge all patiently sayde : Dyd nat I tell you, that whan I herde Xantippe thonder so fast, that it wolde rayne anone after.

Wherby ye maye se, that the wyser a

man is, the more pacience he taketh. The wyse poet Virgil sayth: All fortune by suffrance must be ouercome.

¶ *Of the phisitian that bare his paciente on honde, he had eaten an asse.* I.

¶ A PHISITIAN, which had but smalle lerning, vsed whan he came to viset his pacientes to touche the pulce, and if any appayred, he wolde lay the blame on the paciente and beare him on hande, that he did eate fygges, apples, or some other thinge that he forbade: and bicause the pacientes other whyle confessed the same: they thought he had ben a very connynge man. His seruante hadde great maruayle, howe he parceyued that: and desyred his mayster to tell hym, whether he knewe hit by touching of the pulce, or els by some other hygher knowlege. Than sayde his mayster, for the good seruice that thou haste done me, I will open to the this secrete point. whan I come in to the pacientes chamber, I loke al a bout: and if I spye in the flore shales, parynge of chese, of aples, or of peares, or any other scrappes: anone I coniechte, that the paciente hath eaten therof. And so to thende I wolde be blameles, I lay the faute on theyr mysdiettyngē.

Nat longe after the same seruaunte toke  
on hym to practise physike: whiche in  
lyke maner blamed his pacientes: and  
sayde, that they kepte nat the diete, that  
he gaue them: and he bare them on hande  
that they yete some what, whereof he sawe  
the scrappes in the flore. On a tyme he  
cam to a poure man of the countre, and  
promysed to make him hole, if he wolde be  
gouerned after him: and so gaue him to  
drinke I wote nat what, and went his waye  
tyll an the morowe. whan he came agayne,  
he founde the man sicker than euer he was.  
The rude fole, nat knowinge the cause, be-  
helde here an there aboute: and whan he  
coude se no scrappes, nor parynges, he was  
sore troubled in his mynde. So at the last  
he espied a saddel vnder the bed. Than  
said he all a loude, that he hadde at length  
parceyued, howe the sicke man empayred:  
He hath so excessiuelie passed diete (quod  
he) that I wonder he is nat deed. How  
so quod they? Marye quod he, ye haue  
made him to eate an holle asse: Lo, where  
the saddell lyethe yet vnder the bedde.  
For he thoughte the saddell had be lefte of  
the asse, as bones are of fleshe. For which  
folysshnes he was well laughed to skorne  
and mocked.

Thus as a good saythfull phisitian is worthy of greate honour : for truely of hym dependethe the greatest parte of mans helthe : so lyke wyse a folyshe and an vnlerned, that thynkethe to cure with wordes, that he ought to do with herbes, is nat onely worthy to be deryded and mocked, but also punysshed : for nothinge is more perillous.

¶ *Of the inholders wyfe and her ii. louers.* li.

¶ NERE vnto Florence dwelled an inholder, whos wyfe was nat very dangerous of her tayle. Vpon a nyghte as she was a bed with one of her louers, there came a nother to have lyen with her. Whan she herde him come vp the ladder, she met him, and bade hym go thence, for she hadde no tyme than to fulfylle his pleasure. But for all her wordes he wolde nat go a waye, but styll preaced to come in. So longe they stode chydinge, that the good man came vpon them, and asked them why they brauled so. The woman nat unprouyded of a deceytfull answere sayde : Syr this man wolde come in per force, to slee or myschiefe an other, that is fled into our

house for succoure: and hitherto I haue  
kepte him backe. whan he, that was  
within, herde her saye so, he began to  
plucke vp his harte and say, he wolde be  
a wreked on him withoute. And he that  
was withoute made a face, as he wolde  
kylle him that was within. The folysshe  
man her husbande, enquired the cause of  
theyr debate, and toke vpon him to sette  
them at one. And so the good sely man  
spake and made the pese betwene them  
both. yea and farther he gaue them a  
gallon of wyne: addynge to his wiues  
aduoutry the losse of his wine.

¶ *Of him that healed franticke men.* lij.

¶ THERE dwelled a man in Italy, whiche  
vsed to heale men, that were franticke, on  
this maner. He had within his house a  
gutter, or a ditche full of water: wherin  
he wold put them, some to the middell  
legge, some to the knee, and some dypper,  
as they were madde. So one that was well  
amended, and wente abouete the house to  
do one thinge and other for his meate, as  
he stode on a tyme at the gate, lokinge in  
to the strete, he sawe a gentyll man ryde  
by with a great sorte of haukes and

houndes : the which he called to him and said: you gentyll man whither go ye ? On huntynge, quod the gentyll man. what do you with all those kyttes and dogges, quod he ? They be haukes and houndes, quod the gentyll man. wherfore kepe you them, quod the other ? For my pleasure, quod the gentyl man. what costeth it you a yere to kepe them, quod the other ? xl. duckettes, quod the gentyll man.. And what do they profytte you, quod he ? Foure duckettes quod the gentyll man. Gette the lyghtlye hense, quod the madde man : for if my mayster come and fynde the here : he wyll put the in to the gutter vp to the throte.

This tale toucheth suche yonge gentyll menne, that dispende ouer moche good on haukes, houndes, and other trifils.

¶ *Of hym that sayde he was not worthy to open the gate to the kynge.* liij.

¶ As a kynge of Englande hunted on a tyme in the countie of Kent, he hapte to come rydynge to a great gate: wherby stode a husbande man of the countrey, to whom the kynge sayd: Good felowe putte open the gate. The man perceyuyng it was the kynge, sayde : No and please your

grace, I am nat worthy: but I wyll go  
fetche mayster Couper, that dwelleth nat  
ij. myles hense, and he shal open to you  
the gate.

¶ *Of mayster Vauasour and Turpin his  
man. liij.*

¶ **MAYSTER** Vauasour sometyme a iudge of  
Englande hadde a seruaunt with hym called  
Turpin: whiche had done hym seruyce  
many yeres, wherfore he came vnto his  
mayster on a tyme, and sayde to hym on  
this wyse: Syr I haue done you seruice  
longe, wherfore I pray you gyue me som-  
what to helpe me in myn old age. Turpin,  
quod he, thou sayst trouthe, and hereon I  
haue thought many a tyme: I wyll tell the,  
what thou shalt do. Nowe shortly I must  
ride vp to London, and if thou wilt beare  
my costis thether: I wyll surely gyue the  
suche a thing, that shall be worth to the  
an hundred pounde. I am contente, quod  
Turpin. So all the waye as he rode Turpin  
payd his costis, tyll they came to theyr last  
lodginge: and there after souper he cam to  
his mayster and sayde: Sir I haue born  
your costes hitherto, as ye badde me: nowe  
I pray you let me se, what thynge hit is,  
that shulde be worthe an hundred pounde

to me. Dyd I promise the suche a thinge,  
quod his maister? ye forsoth, quod Turpin.  
Shewe me thy wrytinge, quod maister Vauasour.  
I haue none, sayde Turpin. Than  
thou arte lyke to haue nothinge sayde his  
maister. And lerne this at me: whan so  
euer thou makest a bargayne with a man,  
loke that thou take sure wrytyng, and be  
well ware howe thou makest a wrytyng to  
any man. This poynte hath vayled me an  
hundred pounde in my dayes: and so hit  
may the. whan Turpin sawe there was  
none other remedy, he helde him selfe con-  
tente. On the morowe Turpin taryed a  
lytel behynde his mayster to reken with  
the hostes, where they laye: and of her he  
borowed so moche money on his maysters  
skarlet cloke, as drewe to all the costes that  
they spente by the waye. Mayster Vauasour  
had nat ryden past ii. myle but that it  
began to rayne: wherfore he calledde for  
his cloke: his other seruauntes saide, Turpin  
was behinde and had hit with him. So  
they houedde vnder a tre tylle Turpin over  
toke them. Whan he was come mayster  
Vauasour all angerly sayde: Thou knaue,  
why comest thou nat aweye with my cloke.  
Syr and please you, quod Turpin, I haue  
layde hit to gage for your costes al the  
waye. why knaue, quod his mayster,

diddiste thou nat promyse to beare my charges to London. Dyd I quod Turpin? ye, quod his mayster that thou diddest. Let se, shew me your wrytinge therof quod Turpin. wherto his mayster I thinke answered but lytell.

¶ *Of hym that sought his wyfe against the streme.* lv.

¶ A MAN the whose wyfe, as she came ouer a bridg fell in to the ryuer and was drowned: wherfore he wente and sought for her vpward against the stream, wherat his neigboures, that wente with hym, maruayled, and sayde he dyd nought, he shulde go seke her downewarde with the stremme. Naye quod he, I am sure I shall neuer fynde her that waye: For she was so waywarde and so contrary to euery thyng, whyle she lyuedde, that I knowe very well nowe she is deed, she wyll go a gaynste the stremme.

¶ *Of him that at a skyrmyshe defended him with his feet.* lvi.

¶ A LUSTYE yonge gentyll man of France that on a tyme was at a skyrmysshe, and defended him selfe valyantly with his

feet, came in to the courte, in to a chambre amonge ladies, with a goodly ringe vpon his fynger: to whom a fayre lady sayde: Syr, why weare ye that rynge vpon your fynger? wherfore aske you madame, quod he? Bycause (sayde she) your feet dyd you better seruice than your hands at the last skyrrysshe that ye were at.

By this tale yonge men may lerne to beare them well and valyantly for drede of reproche. Better it is with worshyp to dye than with shame to lyue: albe hit that Demosthenes sayde: He that fleethe cometh agayne to batayle.

¶ *Of him that wolde gyue a song for his dyner.* lvij.

¶ THERE came a felowe on a tyme in to a tauerne, and called for meate. So whan he had well dyned: the tauerner came to reken and to haue his money: to whom the felowe sayde, he had no money, but I wyll, quod he, contente you with songes. Naye quod the tauerner I nede no songes, I must haue money. whye, quod the felowe, if I synge a songe to your pleasure, will ye nat then be contente? yes quod the tauerner. So he began and songe thre or four balades, and asked if he were pleased? No sayde the

tauerner. Than he opened his pourse, and beganne to synge thus:

Whan you haue dyned make no delaye  
But paye your oste, and go your waye.

Dothe this songe please you, quod he? yes marye sayd the tauerner this pleaseth me well. Than, as couenant was (quod the felowe) ye be paid for your vitaile. And so he departed and wente his waye.

This tale sheweth, that a man may be to hastye in makyng of a bargayne and couenantynge: and therfore a man ought to take good hede, what he sayth: for one worde may bynde a man to great inconuenience, if the matter be weighty.

¶ *Of the foole that thought hym selfe  
deed.* Ivijj.

¶ THERE was a felowe dwellynge at Florence, called Nigniaca, whiche was nat verye wyse nor all a foole, but merye and iocunde. A sorte of yonge men for to laughe and pastyme, appoynted to gether, to make him beleue that he was sycke. So whan they were agreed, howe they wolde do, one of them mette hym in the mornynge, as he came out of his house, and bad him good morowe, and than asked him if he were nat yl at ease? No quod the foole,

I ayle nothing I thanke God. By my faith  
ye haue a sickely pale colour, quod the  
other, and wente his waye.

Anone after an other of them mette hym,  
and asked hym if he had nat an ague, for  
your face and colour (quod he) sheweth  
that ye be very sycke. Than the foole  
beganne a lyttel to doubt, whether he were  
sycke or no, for he half beleued, that  
they said trouth. whan he had gone a lytel  
farther, the thyrde man mette him and  
sayde : Jesu manne, what do you out of  
your bed? ye loke as ye would nat lyue an  
houre to an ende. Nowe he doubted  
greatly, and thought verily in his mynde,  
that he had hadde some sharpe ague:  
wherfore he stode styll and wolde go  
no further. And as he stode the fourth  
man came, and sayde : Jesu man, what  
dost thou here, and arte so sycke? Gette  
thee home to thy bedde: for I parceyue  
thou canst nat lyue an houre to an ende.  
Than the foles heart began to feynte, and  
prayde this laste man that came to hym, to  
helpe hym home: yes quod he, I wyll do  
as moche for the as for myn owne brother.  
So home he brought hym, and layde  
hym in his bed: and than he fared with  
hym selfe, as though he wolde gyue vp  
the gooste. Forth with came the other

felowes, and saide he hadde well done to lay hym in his bedde. Anone after came one, whiche toke on hym to be a phisitian: whyche touchyng the pulse, sayde the malady was so vehement, that he coulde nat lyue an houre. So they standyng aboute the bedde, said one to an other: Nowe he gothe his waye: for his speche and syght fayle him: by and by he wyll yelde up the goste. Therfore let vs close his eyes, and lay his hands a crosse, and cary hym forth to be buryed. And than they sayde lamentyng one to an other: O what a losse haue we of this good felowe our frende?

The foole laye styll, as one were deade: yea and thought in his mynde, that he was deade in dede. So they layde him on a bere, and caryed hym through the cite. And whan any body asked them what they caryed, they sayde the corps of Nigniaca to his graue. And euer as they went people drew about them. Among the prece ther was a tauerners boy, the whiche whan he herde that it was the cors of Nigniaca, he said to them: O what a vile bestly knaue, and what a strong thefe is deed, by the masse he was well worthy to haue ben hanged longe ago. whan the fole harde those wordes, he put out his heed and

sayd: I wys hore son, if I were alyue nowe,  
as I am deed, I wolde proue the a false  
lyer to thy face. They that caryed him  
began to laugh so hartilye, that they sette  
downe the bere, and went theyr waye.

By this tale ye maye se, what the per-  
swasion of many doth. Certaynly he is  
very wyse, that is not inclined to foly, if  
he be stered therevnto by a multitude. yet  
sapience is founde in fewe personnes: and  
they be lyghtly olde sobre men.

¶ *Of the olde man and his sonne that  
brought his asse to the  
towne to sylle.* lix.

¶ An olde man on a tyme, and a lyttell boye  
his sonne droue a litel asse before them,  
whiche he purposed to syile at the markette  
towne that they went to. And bicause he  
so dyd, the folkes that wrought by the way  
syde, blamed hym. wherfore he set vp his  
sonne, and went hym selfe on fote. Other  
that sawe that, called hym foole, by cause  
he lette the yonge boye ryde, and he beyng  
so aged to goo a foote. Than he toke  
downe the boye, and lepte vp, and rode  
hym selfe. whanne he hadde rydden a  
lyttell waye, he harde other that blamed  
hym, bycause he made the lyttell yonge

boye ronne after as a seruaunte, and he his father to ryde. Than he sette vppe the boye behynde hym, and so rode forthe.

Anone he mette with other, that asked hym if the asse were his owne: By whiche wordes he coniected, that he did nat wel so to ouercharge the lyttell sely asse, that vnethe was able to beare one. Thus he troubled with their dyuers and manyfolde opinions: whiche neither with his asse vacant, nor he alone, nor his sonne alone, nor bothe to gether rydyng at ones on the asse, coulde passe forth with out detraction and blame: wherfore at last he bounde the asse feet to gether, and put through a staffe, and so he and his sonne began to beare the asse betwene them on their shulders to the towne. The nouelte of whiche syght caused euery body to laughe and blame the folysshenes of them both. The sely olde man was so sore agreued, that as he sat and rested hym on a ryuers syde, he threwe his asse in to the water. And so whan he had drowned his asse, he tourned home agayne. Thus the good man desyrynge to please euerye bodye, contentynge none at all, loste his asse.

By this tale appereth playnelye, that they whiche commyt them selfe to the opinion of the common people, ben oppressed with

great myserye and seruage : For how is it possible to please all, whan euery man hath a dyuers opinion, and dyuerslye iudgeth ? And that was well knownen to the poet, whan he sayde,

*Scinditur incertum studia in contraria vulgus.*

And as Cicero, Persius, and Flaccus say : As many men so many myndes : as many heedes so many wyttes. That, that pleaseth one, displeaseth an other : Fewe alowe that that they loue nat : and that that a man aloweth, he thynketh good. Therfore the beste is, that euery man lyue well, as a good Christen man shulde, and care nat for the vayne wordes, and ianglynge of the people. For bablynge (as Plutarchus sayth) is a greuous disease, and hard to be remedied. For that that shulde heale it (which is wordes of wisdome) cureth them that harkneth there vnto : but pratlers wille here none but them selfe.

¶ *Of him that sought his asse and rode  
on his backe.* lx.

¶ THERE was in the countrey of Florence an husbande man, that vsed to carye corne to the market vpon many lytell asses. On a time as he came home warde, bycause he was somewhat werye, to ease him selfe, he

rode on one the strongest of them. And as he rode dryuinge his asses before him, he counted them, and forgot the asse that he rode on : wherfore he thought still that he lacked one. Thus sore troubled in his mynde, he bad his wyfe set vp his asses, and hastily rode agayne backe to the towne vii. myles of, to seke the asse, that he rode on. He asked of euery body that he met, if they sawe an asse straye alone. whan he herde euery bodye saye they sawe none suche, makynge great sorowe he retourned home agayne. At laste whan he was alyghted his wyfe parceyued and shewerde hym playnlye, that the asse, that he rode on, was the same that he soughte and made suche sorowe fore.

This ieste may be well applied vnto suche as note the defautes, that they lyghtly spy in other, and take none hede, nor can nat se what ils they haue or bene spotted with them selfe.

¶ *The answere of Fabius to Liuius.* lxi.

¶ WHAN Anniball the capitayne of Cartage had conquered Tarent (a towne perteynyng to the Romayns) all sauē the castell, and had lefte a garnison to kepe it, whan the worthy Romayne Fabius had

knowelege therof, he pryuely conducted an armye thether, and got the towne agayne, and pylled it. Than M. Liuius that kepte the castell with a garnison, sayde bostynge him selfe, that Fabius had gotte the towne through him and his helpe. you saye trouth, quod Fabius, for if you had nat loste the towne, I shulde neuer haue gotte hit.

¶ *The answere of Poltis, the kynge of Thrace, to the Troyan embassadours.* lxii.

¶ PLUTARCHE lyke wyse reherseth, that durynge the warre of Troy, the grekes and also the troians sente ambassadours to a kynge of Thrace calledde Poltis, whiche kynge answered th ambassadours and bade, that Alexandre shulde delyuer agayne Helayne (for she was the cause of the warre) and he wolde gyue him ii. fayre wyues for her.

¶ *The wyse answere of Hanibal to kyng Antiochus, concerninge his ryche armye.* lxij.

¶ WHAN kynge Antiochus had prepared to make warre to the Romayns, he caused his armye to mustre before Anniball. So they shewed and mustred both horse men and

fote men : of whose ryche and sumptuous armour and apparaile, al the felde glistred and shone. How saye you quod the kynge to Hanibal, is nat this armye sufficient ynough for the Romayns? yes quod Hannibal, and though they were the moste couetous of all the worlde. The king mente one thing, and he answerd an other.

¶ *The wordes of Popilius the Romayn embassadour to Antiochus the kinge. lxiiij.*

¶ ONE C. Popilius was sente vpon a tyme by the Senatours of Rome, with letters to Antiochus the kynge of Syrye, wherin the kyng was commaunded to calle his armye backe agayne oute of Aegipte : and that he shulde suffer the chyldren of Ptolome and theyr realme in peace. As th embassadour came by the kinges tentes and pauylions, Antiochus a good waye of saluted him, but he did nat salute the kynge agayne, but de lyuered to him his letters. whan the kynge hadde redde the letters, he sayde, that he muste take counsayle, before he made him an answere. Popilius with a rod that he had in his hande made a compace about the kinge, and sayde: Euen here standinge take counsayle and make me an answere. Euen man hadde meruayle at the grauite,

and stout stomacke of the man. And whan Antyochus was contente to do as the Romayns wolde haue hym: Than Popilius both saluted and embraced him.

*¶ Of him that loued the marchants wyfe. lxv.*

¶ THER was a yonge lusty gentyll man vpon a tyme that was ryght amorous, and loued a certayne merchauntes wyfe oute of all measure: in so moche that he folowed her to the churche and other places, but he durste neuer speake. At the laste he with two or thre of his felowes folowed her to a fryers: where he hadde tyme and place conueniente to speake thre or four wordes to her that he before had deuysed. So one of his felowes sayde, go nowe speake to her. But he stode stylly all astonyed. They egged and prouoked him so moche, that at last he wente vnto her, and clene forgettynge those wordes, that he had thoughte to haue spoken he said to her on this wise: Maistres I am your owne lytel seruante. wherat she smyled and sayd: Syr I nede nat your seruyce: for I haue seruantes inow at home, that can brushe, sponge, wasshe, and do all my other busines. The whiche answere, and folysshe basshemente of the gentyl man, caused his felowes to laugh

hartelye. This maner of folye was well knownen to the poet, whan he sayde:

*Incipit affari, mediaque in voce resistit.*

Folyshe loue maketh folkes astonied  
And eke to rauue without remembrance  
Whan they shulde speake, they bene abasshed  
And of theyr wordes can make none vterance  
Nor be so hardye them selfe to auance  
What tyme they se of her the swete face  
Of whom the loue theyr harte doth embrace.

¶ Of the woman that couerd her heed and shewed her taile. lxvi.

¶ As a woman that for a certayne impedimente had shauen her heed sat in her house bare heed, one of her neighbours called her forth hastely in to the strete, and for haste she forgotte to putte on her kerchefe. whan her neighbour sawe her so she blamed her for cominge abrode bare heed: wherfore she whypte vp her clothes ouer her heed. and so to couer her hed she shewed her \*\*\*. They that stode by, beganne to laugh at her folysshenes, whiche to hyde a lytell faute shewed a greater.

This tale touchethe them, that wolde couer a small offence with a greater wyckednesse, and as the prouerbe saythe: Stomble at a strawe, and leape ouer a blocke.

¶ Howe Alexander was monysshed to slee the fyrste that he mette. lxvij.

¶ WHAN great Alexander wold entre in to

Perse lande with his armye, he counsayled with Apollo of his good sped: and by lotte he was warned, that he shulde commaunde to slee the fyrst that he mette, whan he issued out at a gate. Perchaunce the fyrste that he mette, was a man dryuyng an asse before hym. Incontinent the kyng commaunded to take and put hym to dethe. whan the poore man sawe that they wolde slee him, he said: what haue I done: Shall I that am an innocent be putte to deathe? Alexander to excuse his dede, sayde: He was warned by diuine monition to commaund to slee the fyrste that he mette comyng out at that gate. If it be so myghty kyng (quod the man) than the lotte dyuine hath ordeyned an other to suffre this deth and not me: For the lytel asse, that I droue before me, mette you fyrste.

Which subtile sayenge greatly pleased Alexander: for elles he had done amysse: and so he caused the beaste to be slayne.

By this tale one may note, that it is better sometyme to be laste than fyrste.

¶ *Howe the cite of Lamsac was saved from destruction.* lxvij.

¶ As great Alexander on a tyme was fully purposed to haue vtterly distroyed a great cite, called Lamsac, he sawe his mayster

Anaximenes come towarde him without the walles : and bicause the kynge perceyued manifestlye, that he came to entreat hym for the cite, he sware a great othe, that he wolde nat do, that that he came to desyre hym fore. Than Anaximenes sayde: Sir I desyre your grace, that this same cite Lampsac may be vterly distroyed. Through which sage and subtile sayeng the noble auncient citie was sauad from ruyne and destruction.

*¶ Howe Demosthenes defended a mayde. lxix.*

¶ THERE were two men on a time, the whiche lefte a great somme of money in kepyng with a maiden, on this condition, that she shulde nat delyuer hit agayne, excepte they came bothe to gether for hit. Nat lang after one of them cam to hir mornyngly arayde, and sayde that his felowe was deed, and so required the money, and she delyuered it to hym. Shortly after came the tother man, and required to haue the moneye that was lefte with her in kepyng. The maiden was than so sorowfull, both for lacke of the money, and for one to defende her cause, that she thought to hange her selfe. But Demosthenes that excellent oratour spake for her and sayd :

Sir this mayden is redy to quite her fidelite,  
and to deliuer agayne the money, that was  
lefte with her in kepynge, so that thou wylt  
bryngē thy felowe with the to receyue it.  
But that he coude nat do.

**¶ Of him that desyred to be made a  
gentyl man. lxx.**

¶ THERE was a rude clubbysshe felowe,  
that longe had serued the duke of Orliaunce,  
wherfore he cam on a tyme to the duke,  
and desired to be made a gentyl man. To  
whom the duke answered: In good feyth I  
may well make the ryche, but as for gentyl  
man I can neuer make the.

By which wordes appereth that goodes  
and riches do not make a gentyl man, but  
noble and vertuous conditions to.

**¶ Of the gentyll man and his  
shrewde wyfe. lxxi.**

¶ THERE was a certayne gentyll man, that  
had a cursed chydynge wyfe, that wente  
euery day, and complayned on hym to a re-  
ligious man, the whiche religious man toke  
vpon hym by weye of confession to recon-  
cile and accorde them to gether: and the  
gentyll man was very well contente, that he

so shulde do, and came to him therfore. whan the gentyll man was come, the religiouse man badde hym shewe his offences and trespasses. No, quod the gentyll man that nedeth nat: For I knowe verye well my wyfe hath shewed vnto you all the offences that euer I dyd, and moche more.

¶ *Of the two yonge men that rode to Walsyngham.* lxxij.

¶ ONE John Roynoldes rode oute of London vpon a tyme towarde walsyngham, in company of a yonge man of the same cite, that hadde nat moche ben accustomed to ryde. So they came to an Inne, where as great companye was lodged. And in the mornynge whan euery man made hym redy to ryde, and some were on horsebacke setting forwarde, John Roynoldes founde his companion, syttinge in a browne study at the Inne gate: to whom he sayd: For shame man how syttest thou, why doste thou nat make the redy to horsebacke, that we myght sette forwarde with companye: I tary (quod he) for a good cause. For what cause, quod Roynoldes? Marye (quod he) here be so many horses, that I can nat telle whiche is myne owne amonge the other, And I knowe well, whan euery man is riden

and gone, the horse that remaineth behynde  
must nedes be myn.

¶ *Of the yonge man of Bruges, and his  
spouse.* lxxij.

¶ A YONGE man of Bruges, that was betrouthed to a fayre mayden, came on a tyme, whan her mother was out of the way, and had to do with her. whan her mother was come in, anone she perceyued by her doughters chere, what she had done, wherfore she was so sore displeased, that she sewed a diuorse, and wolde in no wyse suffre that the yonge man shulde marye her daughter.

Nat longe after the same yonge man was maryed to an other mayden of the same parysshe. And as he and his wyfe satte talkynge on a tyme of the forsayde dammusell, to whome he was betrouthed, he fell in a nyce laughyng. wherat laugh ye quod his wyfe? It chaunced on a tyme (quod he) that she and I dydde suche a thyng together, and she tolde hit to her mother. Therin (quod his wyfe) she playde the foole: A seruante of my fathers playde that game with me an hundred tymes, and yet I neuer tolde my mother. whan he herde her saye so, he leste his nyce laughyng.

¶ Of hym that made as he hadde ben a  
chaste lyuer. lxxiiij.

¶ A FELOWE that toke vpon him, as he had  
ben the moste chaste and beste disposed  
man lyuinge, was by one of his felowes on  
a tyme taken in aduoutry: and sharply re-  
buked for it, bycause he prated so moche  
of chastite, and yet was taken in the same  
faute. To whom he answerde againe: O  
fool doste thou thinke that I did hit for  
bodely pleasure? No no: I dyd it but  
onely to subdue my flesshe, and to purge  
my reynes.

Wherby ye may perceyue, that of all other  
disemblynge hipocrytes are the worste.

¶ Of hym that the olde roode fell upon. lxxv.

¶ As a man kneled vpon a tyme prayenge  
before an olde rode, the rode felle downe on  
him and brak his hede: wherfore he wolde  
come no more in the churche halfe a yere  
after. At lengthe by the prouocation of his  
nighbours, he cam to the churche agayne.  
And bycause he sawe his nighbours knele  
before the same rode, he kneled downe lyke  
wyse and sayde thus: well I may cappe  
and knele to the, but thou shalte neuer haue  
myn harte agayne as long as I lyue.

H 2

By whiche tale appereth, that by gentyll  
and courteyse entreatinge mens myndes  
ben obteyned. For though the people  
cappe and knele to one in highe authorite,  
yet lyttell whoteth he, what they thynke.

¶ *Of the wydow that wolde nat wedde for  
bodily pleasure.* lxxvi.

¶ THERE was a ryche wydow, whiche desyredde a gossyp of hers, that she wold get her an husband: nat for the nyce playe quod she, but to th entente he may kepe my goodes to gether, whiche is an harde thinge for me to do, beyng alone woman. Her gossyp whiche vnderstode her conceyte, promysed her so to do. Aboute iij. or iiiij. dayes after she came to her agayne, and sayde: Gossyp, I haue founde an husbande for you that is a prudente, a ware, and a wordlye wyse man, but he lacketh his priuey members: wheroft ye force nat. Go to the dyuell with that husbande (quod the wydow) for though that I desyre nat the nyce playe: yet I wylle that myne husbande shall haue that, where with we may be reconciled, if we falle at variance.

¶ *Of the couetous ambassodour, that wolde  
here no musike.* lxxvij.

¶ WHAN a couetous man on a time was come vnto a certain cite, whither he was

sent as ambassadour for his contrey, anon the mynstrels of the cite came to him to fil his eares with swete din, to thintente he shuld fyl their purses with money. But he perceyuyng that, bad one of his seruauntes go and telle them, that he coulde nat than intende to here their musicke, but he muste demene great sorow, for his mother was deed. So the minstrels disapointed of theyr purpose, all sadlye went theyr waye. And whan a worshipfull man of the cite, that was his frende, herd tell of his mourning, he came to visete and comforte him. And so in talkynge together he asked, howe longe a go it was that his mother deceased? Truelye (quod he) hit is xl. yere a go. Than his frende, vnderstandinge his subtilte, beganne to laughe hartely.

This tale is aplyed to the couetous men, whiche by al crafte and meanes study to kepe and encrease theyr money and substance. Agaynst which vyce, many thinges ben wryten. As farre (sayth one) is that frome a couetous man, that he hath, as that he hath nat. And Diogenes calleth couetousnes, the heed of al yuels. And saynt Hieronyme calleth couetousnes the rote of all yuels. And for an example, the tale folowinge shall be of couetousnes.

¶ *How Denise the tirant serued a couetous man.* lxxvij.

¶ It was shewed to Denise the tyran, that a couetous man of the cite had hyd a great some of money in the grounde, and lyued moste wretchedly: wherfore he sente for the man, and commaunded him to go dyg vp the money, and so to deliuier it vnto hym. The man obeyed, and delyuered vnto the tyran all the golde and treasure that he hadde, save a small some, that he priuelye kepte a syde: where with he wente in to an other cite, and forsoke Syracuse: and there bought a lytell lande, where vpon he lyued. whan the tyran vnderstode that he hadde so done, he sent for him agayne. And whan he was come, the tyran sayde to him: Syth thou haste lerned nowe to vse well thy goodes, and nat to kepe them vnprofitably, I wyll restore them all to the agayne. And so he dyd.

¶ *Of the olde man, that quengered the boy oute of the apletree with stones.* lxxix.

¶ As an olde man walked on a tyme in his orcherd he loked vp, and sawe a boye sytte

in a tree stealyng his apples : whom he entreated with fayre wordes to come downe, and let his apples alone. And whan the olde man sawe, that the boye cared nat for him, by cause of his age, and set noughe by his wordes, he sayde : I haue harde saye, that nat onlye in wordes, but also in herbes shulde be greate vertue : wherfore he plucked up berbes, and began to throwe them at the boye, wherat the boye laughed hartelye, and thought that the olde man hadde ben mad, to thynke to drieue hym out of the tree with castinge of herbes. Than the olde man sayde : well seyng that nother wordes nor herbes haue no vertue agaynst the stealer of my goodes : I wylle proue what stones wylle do, in whiche I haue harde men saye, is great vertue : and so he gathered his lappe full of stones, and threwe them at the boye, and compelled hym to come downe, and renne awaye.

This tale sheweth, that they that bene wyse proue many wayes, before they arme them.

¶ *Of the ryche man that wolde not haue a glyster.* lxxx.

¶ THERE was a certayn riche man on a tyme, whiche felle sycke : to the whose curynge

came many phisitians (for flyes by heapes  
flee to honye). Amonge them all there  
was one that sayde: that he muste nedes  
take a glyster, if he wolde be holle. whan  
the sicke man, that was nat envred with  
that medicine, harde hym saye so, he sayde  
in a great furye: Out a dores with those  
phisitians they be madde: For where as my  
payne is in my heed, they wolde heale me  
in myne \*\*\*.

This fable sheweth that holsom thynges  
to them that lacke knowlege and expe-  
ryence, seme hurtfull.

¶ *Of hym that feyned hym selfe deed to proue  
what his wyfe wolde do.* lxxxi.

¶ A YONGE maried man on a time to proue,  
to here, and to se what his wyfe wolde do,  
if he were deed, came in to his house,  
whyle his wyfe was forthe wasshyng of  
clothes, and layd hym downe in the floore,  
as he had ben deed. whan his wyfe came  
in, and sawe hym lye so, she thought he  
had ben deed in dede: wherfore she stode  
even styll: and deuysed with her selfe  
whether was better to bewayle his dethe  
forth with, or els to dyne fyrste, for she had  
eate no meate of all the day. All other  
thinges consydered she determined to dyne

fyrste. So she cut a coloppe of baken, and broyled it on the coles, and began to eate theron a pace, she was so hungrye, that she toke no hede of drynke. At laste the saltenes of the meate made her to thyrste so sore, that she muste nedes drynke. So as she toke the potte in her hande, and was goynge downe into her seller to drawe drynke, sodaynely came one of her neyghbours for a cole a fyre. wherfore she stepped backe quickely, and though she was right thyrsty, yet she sette the potte a syde, and as her husbande had than fallen downe deed, she beganne to wepe, and with many lamentable wordes to bewayle his dethe. which wepyng and waylyng, and sodaine dethe of her husbande, caused all the neyghbours to come thyther. The man laye styll in the floore, and so helde his brethe, and closed his eies, that he semed for to be certayne deade. At laste whanne he thought he had made pastyme inough, and herynge his wyfe saye thus : Alas dere husbande what shall I do nowe ? He loked vp and sayde: Full yll my swete wyfe, excepte ye go quycly and drynke. wherwith they al from wepyng, tourned to laughynge, specially whan they vnderstode the matter, and the cause of her thyrste.

Wherby ye may se, that nat without a  
good skyl the poete sayde:

*Ut fierent oculos erudiere suos.*

¶ *Of the poure man, into whose house theues  
brake by nyghte.* lxxxij.

¶ THERE was a poore man on a tyme, the  
whiche vnto theues, that brake into his  
house on nyght, he sayde on this wyse.  
Syrs I maruayle, that ye thynke to fynde  
any thyng here by nyght, for I ensure you  
I can fynd nothing, whan it is brode day.

*By this tale appereth playnly  
That pouerte is a welthy mystery.*

¶ *Of hym that shulde haue ben hanged for  
his scoffynge.* lxxxiij.

¶ THERE was a mery felowe in hygh  
Almayn, the whiche with his scoffynge and  
iestynge had so moche displeased a great  
lorde of the countrey, that he thretned to  
hang hym, if euer he coude take hym in his  
countrey. Nat longe after this lordes ser-  
uauntes toke hym, and hanged he shulde  
be. whanne he sawe there was no remedy  
but that he shulde dye, he sayde: My lorde,  
I muste nedes suffre dethe, whiche I knowe  
I haue wel deserued: But yet I beseke you

graunte me one peticion for my soule helthe. The lorde, at the instaunce of the people that stode aboute, so it dydde not concerne his lyfe, was contente to graunte it hym. Than the felowe sayde: I desyre you my lorde, that after I am hanged, to come iii. mornynge fresshe and fastynge, and kysse me on the bare \*\*\*\*. where vnto the lorde answered: The deuyll kysse thyne \*\*\*\*: and so let hym go.

¶ *Of hym that had his goose stole.* lxxxiv.

¶ A MAN that had a goose stoole from hym, went and complayned to the curate, and desyred hym to do so moche as helpe that he had his goose again. The curate sayde he wolde. So on sonday the curate as though he wolde curse, went vp in to the pulpit, and bade euery body syt downe: So whan they were set, he said: why sit ye nat downe? we be set al redy, quod they. Naye (quod the curate) he that dyd stele the goose sitteth nat, yes that I do, quod he, Sayeste thou that, quod the curate? I charge the on peyne of cursyng, to bryng the goose home ageyn.

¶ *Of the begger that sayd he was kyn to kyng Philip of Macedone.* lxxxv.

¶ THERE came a begger to kyng Philip of

Macedone on a tyme, and prayde the kyng to gyve hym some what, and farther he sayde he was his kynse man. And whan the kyng asked hym which way, he answered and sayde, howe they came bothe of Adam. Than the kynge commanded to gyue hym an almes. whan the begger sawe it was but a small pece of moneye, he sayde, that was nat a semely gyfte for a kynge. The kynge answered: If I shuld gyue euery manne so moche, that is my kynse manne lyke as thou arte: I shulde leauie nothyng for my selfe.

¶ *Of Dantes answer to the iester.* lxxxvi.

¶ DANTES the poete dwelled a whyle with Can the prince de la Scale: with whome also dwelled an other Florentyne, that hadde neyther lernynge nor prudence, and was a man mete for nothyng, but to scoffe and ieste: but yet with his mery toyes, he so moued the sayd Can, that he dydde greatly enryche hym. And bycause Dantes dispised his folysshenes, this scoffer said to hym: How cometh it Dantes, that thou art holde so wyse and so well lerned, and yet arte poore and nedye? I am an vnlerned man and am an ignorant fole, and yet I am farre richer than thou art. To whom Dantes answered: If I may fynde a lorde

lyke and conformable to my maners, as thou haste founde to thyn: he wyll lyke wyse make me ryche.

¶ *Of hym that had sore eyes.* lxxxvij.

¶ ONE that had sore eies, was warned of the phisitian, that he shulde in any wyse forbear drinking or els lose his eies: To whom he sayd: It is more pleasure for me, to lose myne eies with drinkyng, than to kepe them for wormes to eate them oute.

By this tale ye may perceyue, that it auayleth nat to warne some for theyre owne profytte.

¶ *Of the olde woman that had sore eyes.*  
lxxxvij.

¶ THERE was an olde woman the whiche bargayned with a surgeon to heale her sore eyes: and whanne he hadde made her eies hole, and that she sawe better she couenaunted that he shulde be payde his moneye, and not before. So he layde a medycyne to her eyes, that shulde not be taken awaye the space of v. dayes. In whiche tyme she myghte nat loke vppe. Euerie daye, whan he came to dresse her, he bare awaye some what of her house holde stouffe, table

clothes candelstickes, and dishes : He lefte no thinge, that he coulde carye clene. So whan her eies were hole, she loked vp, and sawe that her householde stouffe was caryede awaye, she sayde to the surgian, that came and required his money for his labour : Syr my promise was to pay you, whan ye made me se better than I did before : That is trouth, quod he. Mary, quod she, but I se worse nowe than I did. Before ye layde medecins to myn eies, I saw moche fayre stouffe in myn house, and now I se nothinge at all.

¶ *Of hym that had the custodi of a warde.* lxxxix.

¶ A CERTAYN man, that had the custody of a ward and his goodes, and in shorte space had spente all awaye: was by the gouernour of the cite commanded to bring in his bookeſ of *Introitus et exitus*, that is to saye, of entraunce and layenge oute: and to gyue accompte of the Orphlins goodes. So whan he came, he shewed fyrste his mouthe, and sayde Here it wente in: and after he shewed vp his \*\*\*\*, and sayde : Here hit wente out: and other bookeſ of *Introitus et exitus* I haue none.

¶ *Of the excellent paynter, that had foule children.* xc.

¶ THERE was a painter in Rome that was an excellent counnyng man: and bycause he had foule children, One sayde to him: By my feyth I maruayle that you paynte so goodelye; and gette so foule chyldren: yea, quod the peynter, I make my chyldren in the darke, and I peynte those fygures by daye lyght.

¶ *Of the scoffer that made a man a south sayer.* xci.

¶ THERE was a mery scoffynge felowe on a tyme, the whiche toke on him to teach a man to be a south sayer: whan they were agreedde, what he shulde haue for his labour: the scoffer sayd to the man holde, eate this rounde pellet, and I warant thou shalte be a south sayer. The man toke and put it in his mouth, and began to champeron, but it sauuered so ill, that he spyt it out forth with, and said: Phy, this pellet that thou gyueste me to eate, sauereth all of a \*\*\*\*\*: Thou sayst trouth (quod the scoffer) Nowe thou art a south sayer, and therefore paye me my money.

¶ *Of the marchaunt of Florence called Charles.* xcij.

¶ A MARCHAUNT of Florence called Charles, came frome Auignone to Rome : And as he sate at souper with a great company, one asked him how the Florentins at Auignone fared : he sayde they were merye and gladde. For they that dwelle there a yere (quod he) be as men that were frantickie and out of theyr myndes. Than an other that sate at souper with them asked this Charles, how longe he had dwelled there. He answered vi. monethes. Charles (quod he that asked him the question) thou haste a great wytte : For hit, that other be about xii. monethes, thou hast fulfylled in halfe a yere.

¶ *Of the chesshire man called Eulyn.*  
xcijj.

¶ THER dwelled a man in Chesshyre called Eulyn, whiche vsed to go to the towne many tymes, and there he wolde sytte drynkyng tyl xii. of the clocke at nyghte, and than go home. So on a tyme he caryed a lyttel boye his sonne on his shulder with him, and whan the chylde fell a slepe

about ix. of the clocke, the ale wyfe brought him to bed with her chyldren. At midnyghte Eulyn wente home, and thought no more on his chylde. Assone as he came home his wyfe asked for her chyld. whan she spake of the chylde he loked on his shulder, and whan he saw he was not ther, he said he wist nat where he was. Out vpon the horson (quod she) thou hast let mi child fal in to the water (for he passed ouer the water of Dee at a brige) Thou list hore (quod he) for if he had fallen in to the water, I shuld haue hard him plump.

¶ *Of him that desired to be set vpon the pillori.* xciv.

¶ THERE were iij. loytteringe felowes fell in compayne on a tyme: the whiche wente so longe together tylle all theyr money was spente. whan their money was gone, one of them sayd: what shal we do now? By my faith (quod an other) if I might come where preace of people were, I coulde get moneye inough for vs. And I (quod the iij.) can assemble people together lyghtly. So whan they came into a lyttelle towne, where a newe pillory was sette vp, he that sayde he coude lyghtly assemble people to gether, went to the bayly of the towne, whiche was

a boucher, and desyred him, that he wolde gyue him leaue to haue the maidenhood of the pyllory. whiche requeste at the fyrste abasshed the bayllye: for he wyst not what he mente therby: wherfore he toke counsayle of his neighbours, what was best to do, and they bade him set vp the knaue and spare nat. So whan he was on the pillorye, he loked aboute, and sawe his ii. felowes busy in the holes of the bouchers aprons, wher thei vsed to put theyr money: than he said: Ther now go to a pace. The people gaped vp stylly and laughed. and whan he saw that his felowes had sped their maters, and were going away, he said to the peple: Now turne the pilori ones about and than I wyl com downe: So they laughing hartily did, whan the felow was com downe from the pyllory, the baylie sayde to hym: By my faythe thou arte a good felowe, and by cause thou haste made vs so good sporte, holde I wyll gyue the a grote to drynke: and so putte his hande in the hole of his apron, but there he founde neuer a penye: Cockes armes(quod the bayllye) my pourse is pycked, and my moneye is gone. Syr (quod the felowe) I truste ye wyll beare me recorde, that I haue hit nat. No by the masse quod he, thou were on the pyllorie the whyle. Than no force quod the felow, and wente his waye.

¶ *Of the wydowes daughter that was sent to the abbot with a couple of capons.* xcvi.

¶ THERE was an abbot that had a wydowe to his tenant, which wydow on a tyme sent her daughter with a couple of capons to the abbotte. And whan the mayden came with her present, she founde the abbot sytting at dyner, to whom she sayd: Moch good dutte the my lorde. Ha welcome mayden quod he. My lorde (quod she) my mother hath sent the here a couple of capons. God a mercy mayden, quod he. And so he made her to be sette downe atte his owne table to eate some meate. Amonge other meates, the abbotte had than a grene goose with sorell sauce, whereof he dyd eate. So one that sat at the abbottes table, gaued the rompe of the goose to the mayde to picke theron. She toke the rompe in her hande, and bycause she sawe the abbot and other wete their meate in the sorell sauce, she sayde. My lorde, I pray the gyue me leue to wete myn \*\*\*\* in thy grene sauce.

¶ *Of the two men, that dranke a pynte of whyte wyne to gether.* xcvi.

¶ THERE came two homely men of the countreye in to a tauerne on a tyme to

drinke a pynte of wine. So they satte stylle, and wiste not what wyne to calle for. At last, herynge euerye man call for white wyne as clere as water of the rocke, they bad the drawer bryng them a pynte of whyte wyne as clere as water of the rocke. The drawer seyng and perceyuyng by their wordes that they were but blont felowes, he brought them a pynte of clere water. The one of them fylled the cuppe, and dranke to his felow, and sayd : Holde neighbour, bymasse, chadde as lefe drynke water, sauе only for the name of wyne.

¶ *Of the doctour that went wyth the fouler  
to catch byrdes.* xcvij.

¶ THERE was a doctour on a tyme, whiche desired a fouler, that went to catche byrdes with an owle, that he might go with hym. The byrder was content, and dressed hym with bowes, and set hym by his oule, and bade him say nothyng. whan he saw the byrdes a lyght a pace, he sayde: There be many byrdes alyghted, drawe thy nettes: where with the byrdes flewe awaye. The byrder was very angry, and blamed him greatly for his speakyng. Than he promysed to holde his peace. whan the byrder was in again, and many byrdes were alyghted,

mayster doctour said in latyn, *Aves permulte adsunt.* wherwith the byrdes flewe away. The byrder came out ryghte angrye and sore displeased and sayde: that by his bab-lynge, he had twyse loste his pray. why thynkest thou foole (quoth the doctour) that the byrdes do vnderstand latin? This doc-tour thought that the vnderstandynge, and nat the noyse hadde feared awaye the byrdes.

¶ *Of hym that undertoke to teache an asse to rede.* xcix.

¶ THERE was a certayne tyran, the which to pylle one of his subiectes of his goodes, commaunded hym to teache an asse to spelle and rede. He sayd it was impossi-ble, except he might haue space inough thereto. And whan the tyran bade hym aske what tyme he wolde, he desyred x. yeres respite. But yet bycause he undertoke a thynge impossible, euerye bodye laughed hym to scorne. He tourned towarde his frendes and sayde: I am nothyng affrayde: for in that space, either I, the asse, or elles my lorde may dye.

By whiche tale appereth, that it is hol-some to take leyser inough, aboute a thynge that is harde to do, specially whanne a man can nat chose to take hit on hande.

¶ *Of the fryer that confessed the woman.*  
xcvij.

¶ As a fayre yong woman of the towne of Amilie confessed her to a friere, he beganne to burne so in concupiscence of the flesshe, that he entyced her to consente to his wylle. And they agreed, that she shulde feyne her selfe sycke, and sende for hym to shryue her. within iij. dayes after she feyned her self sycke, and laye downe in her bedde, and sente for the same fryere to shryue her. whan the friere was come, and euery body voided out of the chambre, he went to bedde to the woman, and there lay a longe space with her. Her husbande suspectyng so longe a confession, came in to the chambre: whose sodayne comynge, so sore abasshed the fryer, that he went his way and lefte his breche behynde him lyenge on the bedde. whan her husbande sawe the breche, he sayd aloude: This was nat a frier, but an aduouterer: And for great abomination of the dede he called all his householde to se hit. And forthe with he went and complayned to the warden of that couent: and thretened to slee hym, that had done the dede. The wardyen to appease his anger sayde, that suche publysshynge was to the shame of hym and his householde. The man said:

the breche was so openly founde, that he coude nat hyde it, The warden to remedy the matter sayde, it was saynt Fraunces breche, an holy relyke, that his brother caryed thither for the womans helth, and that he and his couent wolde come and fetche hit home with procession. with those wordes the man was contente. Anone the warden and his frieres, with the crosse before them, and arayed in holye veste-mentes, went to the house and toke vppe the breche, and two of them on a clothe of sylke, bare it solemye on hyghe betweene theyr handes: and euerye bodye that mette them, kneled downe and kyssed it. So with great ceremony and songe: they brought it home to their couente. But after whanne this was knownen, ambassadoures of the same citie, wente and complayned thereof before the holy see apostolyke.

¶ *Howe a chaplain of Louen deceyued an vsurer.* c.

¶ IN the towne of Louen was a chaplayne called Antonye, of whose merye sayenges and doynges is moche talkynge. As he mette on a daye one or two of his acqueyn-taunce, he desyred them home with him to dyner: but meate had he none, nor money.

There was no remedy, but to make a shefte. Forth he goth, and in to an vserers kyt-chynne, with whome he was famylier: and priueilye vnder his gowne he caryed oute the potte with meate, that was sod for the vsurers dyner. whan he came home, he putte oute the meate, and made the pot to be scoured bryght, and sente a boye with the same pot to the vserer to borowe ij. grotes theron: and bade the boye take a byll of his hande, that suche a brasse potte he delyuered hym. The boy did as he was bydde: and with the money that he hadde of the vsurer, he bought wine for theyr dyner. whan the vsurer should go to dyner, the potte and meate was gone, wherfore he all to chydde his mayde. She said there came no bodye of all the daye, but syr Antony. They asked him: and he sayde he had none. At length they sayde in erneste, he and no man els had the pot. By my fayth (quod he) I borrowed suche a potte vpon a tyme, but I sente hit home agayne: and so called witnes to them, and sayde: Lo howe peryllous it is to deale with men nowe a dayes withoute wrytyng: They wolde lay thefte to my charge, and if I had no wrytinge of the vsurers hande. And so he shewed oute the wrytinge. And whan they vnderstode the disceyte, there was good laughyne.

¶ Of the same chaplen and one that spited  
him. ci.

¶ THE same Antony dyned on a tyme with a sorte of merye felowes. Amonge whome there was one that greatly spited him in his scoffes and merye iestes. And as they sate laughynge and sporting, one asked whiche was the most reuerent part of mans bodye, one sayd the eie, an other the nose, but Antony, bycause he knewe his enuyer wolde name the clene contrarye, sayde the mouth was the most reuerent parte: Naye quod his enuyer, the parte that we sytte on is the moste reuerent. And bicause they meruayled whye, he made this reason, that he was moste honourable amonge the common people, that was fyrist sette. And the parte that he named was fyriste sette. whiche sayenge contented them, and they laughed merelye: He was nat a littell proude of his sayenge, and that he hadde ouer come Anthonye. This past forth, four or fyve dayes after they were bothe bydde to dyner in a nother place. whan Antony cam in he found his enuier that sat talkyng with other, whyle the dinner was makynge redy. Anthony tourned his backe to him and let a great \*\*\*\*\* agaynst his face. His enuyer

greatlye disdayninge sayde: walke knaue with a myschiefe, where hast thou ben nourtered. why, and dysdaynst thou ? quod Antony, if I had saluted the with my mouthe, thou woldest haue saluted me agayne : and nowe I grete the with that parte of my body, that by thyn owne sayenge is moste honourable, thou callest me knaue.

Thus he got agayne his praise, that he hadde loste before.

¶ *Of the olde man that put him selfe in his sonnes handes.* cij.

¶ THERE was a certayne olde man, whiche let his sonne to mary, and to brynge his wyfe and his chyldren, to dwelle within him, and to take all the house in to his owne hande and gydinge. So a certeyne tyme the olde man was sette and kepte the vpper ende of the table, afterwarde they sette him lower, aboute the myddes of the table, thyrdely they set him at the nether ende of the table, fourthly he was set amonge the seruantes, fyfthly they made him a couche behynde the halle dore, and cast on him an olde sacke clothe. Nat longe after the olde man died. whan he was deed, the young mans sonne came to him and sayde: Father I pray you gyueme this olde sacke cloth, that was wont

to couer my graundfather, what woldest thou do with it sayde his father? forsoth, sayd the chylde, it shall serue to couer you whan ye be olde, lyke as it did my grandfather. At whiche wordes of the chylde this man ought to haue ben a shamed and sory. For it is wryten. Sonne reuerence and helpe thy father in his olde age, and make him not thoughtfull and heuy in his lyfe, and though he dote forgyue it him. He that honoreth his father, shall lyve the longer, and shall reioyce in his owne chyldren.

¶ *Of hym that had a flye peynted in his shylde. cij.*

¶ A YONGE man that on a tyme went a warfare, caused a flye to be peynted in his shylde, euen of the very greatnes of a flye: wherfore some laughed at hym and sayde, ye do well, because ye wyll not be knownen. yes quod he, I do it because I wyll be knownen and spoken of. For I wyll approach so nere our enimys, that they shall well decerne what armes I beare.

Thus it that was layde to him for a blame of cowardise, was by his sharpe wytte turned to a shewe of manlynes.

¶ And the noble and valiaunt Archidamus  
sayde shotte of crossebowes, slynges, and  
suche lyke ingins of warre are no proffe of  
manhode, but whan they come and fyghte  
hande to hande, appeareth who be men and  
who be not.

¶ *Of th emperour Augustus and the olde  
men. civ.*

¶ As the noble emperour Augustus on a time  
cam in to a bayne, he behelde an olde man  
that hadde done good seruice in the warres,  
frotte him selfe a gaynste a marble pyller for  
lacke of one to helpe to wasshe him, th em-  
perour moued with pite gaue an annuite to  
fynde hym aud a seruant to wayte vpon  
him. whan this was knownen a great sorte  
of olde men drewe them to gether, and  
stode where as the emperour shulde passe  
forth by, euerye one of them rubbyng his  
owne backe with a marble stone. The em-  
perour demaunded why they dyd so? By-  
cause noble emperour, sayd they, we be not  
able to kepe seruantes to do it. why quod  
the emperour, one of you maye clawe and  
frotte an others backe well inough.

*¶ Phocions oration to the Athens. cv.*

¶ PHOCION on a daye treatyng a longe oration to the people of Athenes, plesed them very wel. And whan he sawe, that they all to gether allowed his wordes, he tourned to his frendes and sayd. Haue I vnwarely spoken any hurte? So moche he perswaded hym selfe, that nothyng could plese them that was well and truly spoken.

*¶ Of Demosthenes and Phocion. cvi.*

¶ DEMOSTHENES sayde to Phocion: If the Atheniens falle ones in a madnes, they woll slee the. To whom he answered: ye surely, if they waxe madde they woll slee me, but an they waxe ones wyse, they wyll slee the. For Demosthenes spake moche to the peoples pleasure, and spake thynges rather delytable than holsome.

*¶ Of Phocion that refused Alexanders gyfste. cvij.*

¶ WHAT tyme Alexander kynge of Mace-  
done sent an hundred besauntes of golde  
for a gyfste to Phocion, he asked them that  
brought the money, how it came, that Alex-

ander sent it to hym alone, seyng there were many other men in Athenes beside him. They answered, ~~because~~ he iugeth you alone to be an honest and a good man. Therfore, quod he, let hym suffre me to be taken and to be suche one styl.

Who wolde not wonder at the cleane and vncorrupt courage of this Phocion ? He was but a poore man, and yet the greatnes of the gyft coude nothinge moue hym. Besyde also he shewed, that they, the whiche, while the mynistre the common welthe, absteyne not from takyng of gystes, neyther be nor ought not to be taken for good men.

**T Of Denyse the tyranne and his sonne.**  
cvijj.

**T** WHAT tyme Denyse the tyranne vnderstode that his sonne that shulde reigne after hym, had commytted aduoutry with a wroshypfull mans wyfe, angerly he sayde to hym, Dyd I, thy father, euer suche a dede ? The yonge man answered. No, ye had not a kynge to your father. Nor thou, sayde Denyse, art not lyke to haue a sonne a kynge, excepte thou leauie commytyngne of suche wyckedde dedes.

¶ Of Pomponius the Romayne, that was  
brought before Mithridates cix.

¶ POMPONIUS a noble man of Rome, sore  
hurte and wounded, was taken and brought  
before Mithridates, whiche asked hym this  
questyon. If I cure and heale thy woundes  
wylte thou than be my frende: he answered  
hym agayne thus. If thou wylte be a frende  
to the Romaynes, thou shalt than haue me  
thy frende.

This was a noble stomacke, that prefered  
the welth of his countrey before his owne  
helth.

¶ Of Titus and the iester. cx.

¶ SUETONIUS sheweth that Titus the father  
prouoked a scoffer, that stode iesting with  
euery body, thot he shulde lyke wyse saye  
somewhat to hym: I woll, sayde the scoffer,  
after ye haue done youre easement. He  
ested at the emperours countinance, he  
loked alway as one that streyned hym selfe.  
On suche a visaged man writeth Martiall.

*Utere lactucis, ac mollibus utere maluis.  
Nam faciem durum Phebe cacantis habes.*

¶ *Of Scipio Nasica and Ennius the poete.*  
cxi.

¶ WHAN Scipio Nasica came on a tyme to speake with Ennius the Poete, he asked his mayde at the dore, if he were within, and she sayde, he was not at home. But Nasica perceyued, that her mayster badde her say so, and that he was within : but for that tyme dissemblynge the matter, he wente his waye. within a fewe dayes after Ennius came to Nasica, and knockyng at the dore. asked if he were within. Nasica hym selfe spake oute a loude, and sayd, he was not at home. Than sayde Ennius. what manne, thynke you that I knowe not your voyce ? where vnto Nasica aunsweredde and sayde. what a dishoneste man be you ? whan I sought you, I beleued your mayde, that sayd ye were not at home, and ye wyll not beleue me myn owne selfe.

¶ *Of Fabius Minutius, and his sonne.*  
cxij.

¶ FABIUS Minutius was of his sonne exhorted on a tyme to gette and conquere a place that was mete for them, and to theyr

great auaantage: the whyche thynge he sayde, they might do with the losse of a fewe men. wyll ye be one of those fewe, sayde Fabius to his sonne?

Therby shewyng, that it is a poynct of a good capiteyne to care for the lest of his souldiours, and to sauе them as nere as he coude.

Th emperour Antonius Pius loued moche this sentence of Scipio, whiche wolde ofte saye: I hadde leauer sauе one citezen, thanne slee a thousande ennemyes.

*¶ Of Aurelian, that was displeased, by-cause the cite Tyna was closed agaynst hym. cxij.*

¶ WHAT tyme the emperour Aurelian came to the cytie Tyana, he founde hit closed agaynste hym, wherfore all angerly he sayde: I woll not leaue a dogge a lyue in this towne. whiche wordes reioyced moche his menne of warre, by cause of the great praye aud botye, that they thoughte to wynne there. One of the citezins, called Heradamon, for feare lest he shuld be slayne amonge the other, betrayed the cyte. whan Aurelian had taken the cite, the fyrst thinge he did, he slewe Heradamon the traytour to his contrey. And to his souldiors, that

came to hym and desyred, that they myght accordynge to his promyse, ouerren and spoile the cyte, he answered: Go to, I sayde, I wolde nat leaue a dogge a lyue, spare nat, kyll al the dogges in the towne.

By this meane the gentyl prince, re-  
warded the traytoure accordinge to  
his deseruinge, and dispointed  
the couetise of his soul-  
dyours.

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¶ Cum priuilegio.

†

## GLOSSARY.

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- ADUOUTRY**, adultery.  
**AMBAGIOUS**, circumlocutory.  
**BAYNE**, *Fr. bain*, a bath.  
**CHADDE**, *Ich had*, I had.  
**DANGEROUS**, difficult, sparing.  
**DUTTE**, do't, do it.  
**FROTTÉ**, *Fr.* to rub.  
**GARNISON**, *Fr.* garrison.  
**GRYCE**, step.  
**GUERYSHEDDE**, *Fr. guerissoit*, healed, recovered.  
**Hovedde**, flocked, hovered.  
**HYGH ALMAYN**, Allemagne, *Fr.* High Germany.  
**Iwyss**, truly, verily.  
**JANWAYES**, *Lat. Janua*, Genoese.  
**LEASYNG**, a lye, a falsehood.  
**LIMITOUR**, a friar licensed to beg within a certain  
district  
**LYBELL**, *Lat. libellus*, a book.  
**PERYSSHYNNS**, parishioners.  
**POLLER**, a cheat.  
**POLLYNGE**, cheating.  
**PREACED**, pressed.  
**PROOLED**, sought.  
**PYLLED**, pillaged.  
**QUENGERED**, conjured.  
**ROWNED**, whispered.

## GLOSSARY.

- SCROWES**, scrolls, writings.  
**SERVAGE**, slavery.  
**SHALES**, shells.  
**SKELES**, skill.  
**STRAUGHT**, stretched.  
**SWEVENES**, dreams.  
**SYTHE**, since.  
**TOTETH**, gazeth.  
**TOTTYE**, dizzy.  
**VAYLED**, availed.  
**WENDE**, guessed, supposed.  
**WENE**, guess, suppose.  
**WHOTETH**, knoweth.  
**WYTE**, blame, fault.  
**YETE**, eat.

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